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THE
MORAL LAW:

A SERIES OF
PRACTICAL SERMONS

ON THE
DECALOGUE,

OR
The Ten Commandments;

PREACHED IN EMMANUEL CHURCH,
COLOMA, CALIFORNIA,

BY THE
REV. DAVID F. MACDONALD, A. M.,

OF THE
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

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PREFACE.

THE only object the writer of this book had in getting the following sermons printed, was to raise money to pay a church debt. He knows full well that they are very ordinary productions ; and that they are nothing in sum and substance but what the reader may find in any writer upon the law. They were prepared in a hurry—so the reader will read and examine in charity.

SERMON I.

INTRODUCTORY.

TEXT—Exodus xx, 1: “*And God spake all these words, saying.*”

MY BRETHREN: There are two great branches of duty, about which all believers in christianity generally agree, as being necessary to salvation, viz: FAITH and OBEDIENCE, or TO BELIEVE AND TO DO. These two branches of the christian's duty are only distinguishable in idea, not in reality; for in act, in intention, and tendency, they are one and the same thing. There are, generally speaking, but few important differences amongst those who are in earnest about duty, with regard to the essentials of Faith—What must be believed; and also with regard to the essentials of Obedience—What ought to be practiced. Hence it may seem useless to say any thing, either of Faith or Obedience, since they are so widely and accurately known. Yet because man is not blessed or made happy, by a mere barren knowledge of his duty, without a due and hearty practice of the same, but by knowledge followed by practice, we must therefore, notwithstanding the task may seem useless, say things which have often been uttered before, in exposition of matters that are already known; not indeed that they may be better known, but better practiced. “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” First we must *know*, and then *do*.

Of FAITH, as contradistinguished from OBEDIENCE, we shall say little or nothing in the work before us. Our task will be to discover the measure of Obedience, as contained in the “Moral Law,” without which Faith is dead and unprofitable. That measure is reduced, as we all know, to one comprehensive code of laws, recorded in the chapter to which the text is a preface. “God spake all these words.” Before proceeding to the exposition of the “words” spoken, it is highly becoming and important

that we should lay down some brief rules, as so many general guides to the explanation and understanding of this short and graphic collection of laws.

The DECALOGUE, or TEN COMMANDMENTS, consisting of what is called the "Moral Law," was first promulgated to the Jews, by God himself; but He, by no means, intended that it should be binding upon that people alone. The Jews were the especial people, who lived under the Old Testament dispensation; hence it was proper that these writings should be primarily and particularly addressed to them. We find that when the "fullness of time" had come, this law was delivered to both Jews and Gentiles; more fully expounded, and more perfectly declared by Christ in the New Testament. The law being only a type, or a shadow of the Gospel, the Gospel is that law finally fulfilled, and clearly exemplified. Hence the Church, as the visible kingdom of the Gospel, has not only deemed it expedient, but also essential to continue the promulgation of the Decalogue in her services; since it is the sum-total or perfection of Christian Obedience, as exemplified and expounded by our Lord in the New Testament, the rule alike for Jew and Gentile, bond and free.

These laws are called the "Ten Commandments," because they have been usually divided into that number; and because they were originally delivered to Moses by God Himself, in that numerical quantity. They are divided into two general classes or tables—the first of which commands our duties to God; and the last, those we owe our neighbor. God Himself, no doubt, intended this division, since He commanded Moses to prepare two tables of stone, on one of which He wrote the first four laws of the Decalogue, which comprehend our duties to God; and on the other, the remaining six, which refer to those duties we owe our neighbor. This, without doubt, is the proper division, although some christians have made and maintain different ones.

Some Antinomians, and other objectors to the law, maintain that the Decalogue is an imperfect guide to duty, because, although it is upon the whole, plain and explicit as to our duties to God and our neighbor, it is silent with respect to those we owe ourselves. There is a rule to be observed here. It is not that alone, we are positively and directly commanded to do, or not to do in these laws, which we are to consider binding; but also what is indirectly, and by implication commanded us to observe, though the words be not expressed. If this be so—and most assuredly it is—then our duties to ourselves are laid upon us, by implication, with as much stress as those we owe to God and our neighbor. Hence, the Decalogue may safely be considered as by no means silent on this point. He who fulfills his duty to God and man, of necessity discharges those he owes to himself. We are told that the "fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." To

fear the Lord is the spirit of the first Table. Now, by obeying the laws of the first Table, a man becomes the benefited recipient of true wisdom. This is a bounden duty as well as a great privilege and blessing. Hence, by *fearing God*, which, when properly understood, is the sum-total of our duty to Him, we discharge duties we owe to ourselves.

To love our neighbor as ourselves, is the spirit of the second Table. Obedience to this plain and universal law, will gain a thousand sure and sublime promises—will insure the blessedness that attends the living charity, which loves to give and to do good. To hate our neighbor and abandon charity, is nothing more than to deprive ourselves of hope in the everlasting promises of heaven, and to lose a blessedness, beyond description felicitous and glorious. Surely this is to be guilty of the most abandoned and flagrant dereliction of the highest and most imperative duties we owe to ourselves. But to love our neighbor, and exercise charity, is the fulfillment of them.

If we take the first commandment, we will discover that duties to ourselves are implied in the expressed law, "Thou shalt have none other Gods but me." Our acceptance of Him, and His of us, depend upon conditions—our own faithful and earnest efforts and endeavors to fulfill the whole law with respect to our neighbor and ourselves. In fact, the faithful discharge of these several duties, is necessarily involved in the commandment itself. "Thou shalt have none other Gods but me." Hence, we may fairly conclude, that the law is not silent on the duties we owe ourselves; for these are inseparably connected, and naturally included in those we owe God and our neighbor. In fact, they mutually implicate each other. The two Tables are, therefore, a full and a perfect law to all men, as they are perfected and exemplified in the Gospel.

There is a very important division of these laws, to which I must direct your attention. This consists, not in distinguishing the parties to whom our duties are to be discharged. It separates the laws themselves into two particular classes, which look to the nature and extent of their obligations, making one set conditional and the other unconditional. They are called, respectively, POSITIVE and NEGATIVE; *i. e.*, those which demand obedience only, under certain circumstances, in certain places, and at certain times, and those which demand obedience under all circumstances, in all places, and at all times. One class tells us what we ARE to do; the other what we are NOT to do. The positive or conditional is as eternally binding upon those who come under its obligation, as is the negative or unconditional. Certain circumstances, and places, and times, may, indeed, relieve the obligation to observe the former portion; yet it is as unconditional as the negative the moment the obligation becomes just and proper. Take, for example, the positive command which relates to the honoring of our father

and mother. The obligation, so far as it holds us to treat our natural parents with due respect, at once gives way to the circumstance or fact of our having no father or mother to honor. To those who have no natural parents living, this command ceases its obligation as to the thing positively or generally expressed; yet it will remain in full force, even over them, so long as they may stand in certain relations to other men, who, in any sense or degree, will occupy the room of parents. A combination of circumstances may also do away with the obligation of the command with respect to the Sabbath—*i. e.*, as to Sunday or the particular day of rest after six of labor; yet the obligation stands good with respect to the Sabbatical proportion, which, indeed, all men, in almost all circumstances, are enabled to observe. In fact, the positive portion of the law puts us under as eternal an obligation as does the negative, whenever these conditions exist. The negative commandments, on the other hand, take no account of condition. They make no compromise whatever; unless, indeed, in such cases as idiocy, insanity, or the like. Their obligations are perpetual and unchangeable; on no ground or occasion whatever can an infringement of them be justified or excused. No circumstance, time or place can possibly excuse adultery, theft, murder, covetousness, or idolatry, although they may somewhat mitigate them. Our obligations in regard to these sins are as eternal as the pillars of heaven itself—more steadfast than the round world—more endurable than the outspread firmament—unchangeable as the throne of God.

There is a peculiarity in this division which we must observe. The positive and the negative mutually include or involve each other. In fact, every positive includes a negative, and every negative a positive. For instance, my profession is the ministry of the Gospel. Here is a positive; but it includes the consequent negative, that it is not the law or military. Again, my profession is not the latter. Here is a negative; but it involves a positive; I mean to say that it *is* something else, and that that something else *is* the ministry. This statement will hold good with every positive and negative. The negative commandment which prohibits theft—"Thou shalt not steal"—includes the positive, "Provide all things honestly;" "Thou shalt do no murder," the same with respect to those positive precepts which teach us to abstain from shedding innocent blood. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" commands the same with respect to the multifarious positive injunctions which oblige us to be pure in desire and act. You may here see negative commandments including positive. Now, take one or more of the positive. "Honor thy father and thy mother," &c., is the same as if it read, thou shalt not dishonor them. "Keep holy the Sabbath day," &c., is saying nothing more than thou shalt *not do* any manner of work therein. Here you have positive commandments

including negative. When, therefore, God commands us to do something, we are to understand Him also as forbidding us to do anything contrary to that something which is commanded to be done. And when he commands us *not* to do a certain thing, we are also to understand Him as commanding us to do whatever is contrary to the thing forbidden. In other words, when God commands a duty to be performed, He forbids whatsoever is contrary thereto to be done by us. Again, when He forbids anything to be done, He does thereby positively require us to fulfill the opposite duty implied, as well as to avoid the sin which is expressly taken notice of. To make it clearer: when God says, "Thou shalt do no murder," we are not merely to understand Him as forbidding us to take away life unlawfully, by shooting, stabbing, poisoning, or such like, but also as commanding us to do what is quite the contrary—to love our neighbor, to cherish and preserve his life, his person, health and property. Thus, at one and the same time, we are commanded *not to do* and *to do*, in the same breath: *not to do*, by abstaining from murder, or anything that may be referred to it; and *to do*, by exercising love, charity and kindness. "Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day." In this law we are commanded *to do* and *not to do*, in the same breath: *to do*, by spending the Sabbath in a way suited to its holy purposes; *not to do*, by withholding our hands from all secular or ordinary labor on that day.

To these peculiarities in the law we should pay strict attention, since it cannot be fairly understood, as it is proposed to us, unless these are taken into account.

There are several general rules laid down by learned divines, which are intended to be used in the exposition as well as right practice of the Decalogue. The spirit of the more important may be given as follows. **EACH COMMANDMENT IS GENERAL**, therefore exceedingly comprehensive. All particulars comprehended under the general, or that may be rightly and fairly referred to it, are to be considered and believed to be true and proper parts of the commandment itself. And not only all the particulars which are included directly, and of course under the general, but also all such as may be properly dependent upon it, or may be fairly and reasonably deduced therefrom or referred thereto, are to be considered as so many true and proper parts of the commandment itself. In other words, all such particulars as are directly dependent upon the general command, or can with reason and justice be deduced therefrom, should and must be deemed as included in the obligation which pervades the general law. Thus, when we are commanded not to be guilty of adultery, the precept is not only against the one isolated act, or sin perfected in that, which is denominated adultery, but also against all acts partaking of its nature—all temptations which would endanger its commission—all means whereby

the act is hastened or accomplished, and all things which would in any wise tend to it. Fornication is nothing less than adultery—in act, in intention, in nature—and, in its consequences, is sometimes more cruel and desolating; yet it is not expressly forbidden, or even mentioned, in the general law; but it is, without doubt, included in it, under the comprehensive term, adultery. The same may be said of all unclean thoughts and desires; for they can all be referred to the general thing that is expressly prohibited. Also all unchaste and immodest actions and libidinous expressions; all passionate looks and wanton behavior; unseemly and indecent clothing; all manner of uncleanness whatever; all lasciviousness, either of thought, word or deed; the impassioned and sparkling eye of the envious; the burnings and sighings of the lewd and criminal heart; in fact, everything which would approach the thing forbidden is included in the law forbidding. But this is not all. Everything which would lead to the crime forbidden, even the most remote means, or cause and incitement to its accomplishment; such as high and extravagant living, which strengthens and excites the passions; rich, soft and delicate clothing; indulgence in unchaste and voluptuous imaginations; wanton and corrupting conversations; everything is really prohibited, which would endanger our obedience to that which is generally expressed in the law—which would tempt or incite us to approach the forbidden thing or destroy the continence which befits the children of a pure and jealous God.

The spirit of the second rule to be observed in the proper understanding of the Decalogue may be thus expressed: when there is any duty expressly stipulated and inculcated, and when any sin is pointedly forbidden, we must consider ourselves fully obligated to employ every means in our power to fulfill the duty inculcated and to avoid the sin prohibited. When we are commanded not to steal, we must also use all means to preserve honesty, which is the duty stipulated; and, by so doing, we will always be instant in eschewing dishonesty, which is the sin prohibited. The prohibition against theft calls to the employment of a thousand things, as so many means which are conducive to what is contrary to it, viz: HONESTY. Hence we are not merely commanded to abstain from stealing, but also to live within our means; to labor honestly, if our circumstances require us to labor at all; to avoid extravagance; to abstain from all fraud and chicanery in our transactions; to look to our neighbor's rights; to cultivate and befriend truth; to keep company with the honest and reputable; to flee from the gambling table; to live in sobriety and frugality; to cast away strife, hatred, malice, envy and covetousness; to avoid all manner of excess, such as drunkenness, surfeiting and feasting, expensive dressing, &c., &c.; to have no dishonest familiars, nor cultivate any intercourse or acquaintance with such; to be careful and diligent in all our lawful avo-

cations ; not to be idle or dissolute, but to avoid whatever might cause or tempt us to an infringement of that which is commanded us. This is a very important rule to be observed, and it ought to be continually present with us.

But there is another which we must notice, and it will be the last, although many others might well be stated here. When God commands us to do anything as a duty, or forbids us to do anything as a sin, we are to consider ourselves obligated to incite, encourage and assist other men, in every possible and proper way and by all the available means in our power, to perform what is commanded them to do. We are also bound to discourage, thwart and deter them, in every reasonable and just way, and by all lawful and proper means, from doing that which is forbidden. By doing this, we discharge, in a measure, the duties we owe our God and our neighbor ; but, by neglecting it, we become not only guilty of a direct intrenchment upon God's law ; we not only stain the character which that law would impress upon ourselves, as children of God, but we harden other men in sin and become ourselves real partakers in their iniquity, however enormous or abominable it may be, in as much as we give our countenance thereto. This rule teaches us that we are sternly prohibited from aiding or abetting other men, in their sins, in any manner or way whatever. We are to take care that we put no temptation in their path ; never give any countenance to their evil deeds, either by approving of them or by passing over them in silence ; we are not to excuse or wink at their transgressions, nor to mock or make light of them ; for "fools make a mock at sin." We are not to extenuate or conceal their criminalities ; but, on the contrary, we are to rebuke sin by our example and precept, wherever, whenever, and in whomsoever we may meet it. This is certainly a rule of the highest importance ; for men are very apt to conclude that, if they themselves fulfill the law to the best of their ability, they do sufficient—they meet all requirements ; and that anything over and above this is a thankless struggle or a work of supererogation.

There is, my brethren, a great deal more, both in the measure and manner of that obedience which is required of us, than hundreds around us would at first suppose. Men generally will make a measure for themselves, and will obey God after that measure, or not obey him at all. They will also adopt a manner equally as shortcoming and as unacceptable as their measure, and after that manner they will serve God, come what will. Men will, in the hurry and strife of this passing life, pick up crude and clashing notions of what is required of them, under the soul-destroying impression that God is easily satisfied or that He is easily cheated into an approval of a counterfeit, dishonorable and unprofitable obedience. But, oh, how careful should each reasonable and immortal being be, while the

harvest is not yet past, nor the summer yet ended—while he is yet blessed with time and opportunity, *to obey well*, i. e., to discover, not only the manner of his obedience, but also the measure of it. If “Faith be sitting at Jesus’ feet, and Obedience running to do His will,” how anxious should we be to know what that is which is taught at the feet of Jesus and that which we ought to believe and hold fast! How watchful, how eager, how importunate should we be, while “running to do His will,” to know what that will is—to measure its length, its height and depth—how fast, how slow, and when, and where we ought to run! We must, certainly, sooner or later, come boldly up to the inquiry; but not until then can we comprehend its difficulty and precariousness.

It is said that, if men should expend one-half of the pains and energy which they employ in amassing riches, or in securing influence and power, on the noble work of becoming proper and intelligent Christians—servants, who would not only know their Master’s will but be ready to do it—we should soon have a world of good sound Christians. I doubt it not; at all events, we would have no reason to utter the oft-repeated complaint that hundreds and thousands who have lived all their lives under the sound and teachings of the Gospel have yet to learn its very rudiments, and are all but totally ignorant of its simplest and most fundamental principles. But men will not labor in this work, deeming those things but a small consolation in time, which have blessed the redeemed of God with imperishable glory in eternity.

If the world were less wise in its own conceit—if men who boast of knowledge would condescend to begin to learn anew—if they once could be brought to doubt *for once*, that they might believe *for ever*, all the words which “God spake,” all the providences in which he remembers and visits man, all His dark things would no longer be misunderstood; in all things He would be found infinitely wiser than man.

Let us, therefore, who are come together to learn the words which He spoke while the thunders shook the everlasting Mount and the fires illumined the sacred height—let us, I say, be prepared to study these words, in all humility and all conscience.

SERMON II.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

TEXT—Exodus xx, 3 : “*Thou shalt have none other Gods but Me.*”

This is the first law of the great “moral code;” sublimely graphic, fearfully comprehensive; simple, yet invested with awful authority; calm, yet surrounded with mysterious terrors. It is introduced to our consideration by a most sublime and sententious preface: “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” There are included, in this introduction to the law to the Jews, the two great motives for their obedience. 1st, the Lord was their God, and none else. 2d, He it was who delivered them from the power of their enemies, and from the bondage of Egypt. Since the Jew is a type of the Christian, this preface also includes the two great motives of the Christian’s obedience. The Church being the New Jerusalem, its members are the spiritual Israel; “they have become the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ;” they are Jews—not outwardly, “as by the circumcision of the flesh, but inwardly, by the circumcision of the heart.” Hence, the spiritual seed of Abraham are not only moved to the obedience of the law by the stupendous consideration of having the Lord for their God, but also by the mighty deliverance wrought for them, of which the Jewish was a faint yet significant shadow. “By the law, of which Moses was the mediator, the children of Israel, according to the flesh, engaged, with a view to the promised inheritance of the land of Canaan, to yield implicit obedience to the divine will.” But, under the Gospel covenant, as ratified and sealed by the blood of Jesus—as revealed and inculcated by Himself and Apostles, Christians promise implicit obedience to the same will or LAW, as perfected in the Gospel, “with a view to the promise of an everlasting inheritance,” of which the earthly Canaan was but a type. To the spiritual Jew, then, the Lord is God, by a new and a far better covenant. His will is bound upon the Christian with double chains; for He makes him an heir to eternal and glorious promises—to benefits and pos-

sessions which eclipse the most valuable in the old. A deliverance has been wrought out for him, from the power of sin and the chains of the grave—the oath which God swore of old to his father Abraham being remembered and fully redeemed, “That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life.” As it was in the covenant of Moses so is it in the Christian; God and man being the contracting parties, “the benefits are wholly on one side, and the obligations on the other.” Hence, since the benefits showered upon the Christian are infinitely greater than those promised or bestowed upon the Jew, and the obligations on the part of God to the Christian, infinitely higher than to the Jew, the grounds and motives of the Christian to obedience must be raised in the same ratio. Thus the law, unchanged and unrepealed as it stands and will ever stand before us, demands from us, as Christians, if possible, a more implicit, a more careful, and a more perfect fulfillment than it did from the Jew. Let us, therefore, being persuaded of this, proceed with this brief exposition of the law which so closely concerns us.

“Thou shalt have none other Gods, but me.” The phraseology of this law, as, indeed, of all the others, is exceedingly peculiar; and the peculiarity consists in its comprehensiveness and brevity. 1st, we are to have the Lord for our God; and, 2d, we are to have none other, either in company with Him, or beside Him, as ours. We are to have a God, and that God is to be the Lord, who ought to, and must be the only object of our thoughts—our love, our homage, and our worship. Here we have a true, worthy, and legitimate object of *Faith* and *Worship*; in other words, it inculcates pure and undefiled religion, as contradistinguished from infidelity and idolatry. The rest forbids us either to have, with, without, or besides the Lord, any God or Gods, for all such are unworthy objects of *Faith* or *divine Worship*.

But what is it TO HAVE the Lord for our God? “To have” is a very comprehensive expression, subject to many definitions and interpretations, appropriate to, and useful in the exposition of this command. Two or three will answer our present purpose.

First, then, we must *have* God as the highest and continual object of our thoughts and meditations. We must think of an object as becomes its nature, character and dignity. As this command binds us to the duty of *having* the Lord as the subject of our thoughts, we must regard Him as possessing all the infinite perfections and attributes which His revealed character discloses. This revelation presents us not with a God who is a mere metaphysical abstraction, as some would make Him out to be, but as One invested with the tremendous attribute of ETERNITY. He is an eternal Being, who existed, alone and independent, back—far back of the millions

of ages which make up the dull and starless night of the unmeasurable past; who lived alone, in uncommunicated glory, perfection, and majesty, long, long before the voice of His omnipotent Spirit disturbed the eternal silence that slept over the shoreless bosom of chaos—that time immeasurable, before the sweet vicissitude of night and day gladdened either man or angel; long, long before the voice of war and rebellion was heard in heaven, or ere the divine faggot blazed in the unsearched profounds of hell; long before the pillars of heaven itself were reared on high, or the firmament, with its bright host, was uncurtained to the light of day; long, long before His courts were peopled with His winged legions, or ere the universe felt the creative touch of His hand. “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were fashioned, He is God from everlasting to everlasting—the *First* and the *Last*, and besides whom there is no God. He *was*, and *is*, and *shall be* world without end.”

Second, We must think of Him as an *infinite, omnipresent God*. He fills, with His awful presence, the limitless universe, the confines of which may appear to us a boundless and a desert waste. The heaven—yea, the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, nor can the shadow of the earth mantle His glory. To Him hell stands naked and uncovered. His foot-prints are on the sullen rock and barren, unpeopled shore. His chariot-wheels roll in the darkest and most secret bowels of the deep. The grave cannot hide from His presence, nor can the wings of the morning carry us away to a spot where His hand is not seen nor His voice heard. Ascend, ascend, for ever and ever, but, behold, His presence is still far, far beyond you. Plunge down into the thickest glooms of eternal night—you find Him even there. “Whither shall we go from thy spirit? or whither shall we flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If we take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead us, and thy right hand hold us. If we say, surely the darkness shall cover us, even the night shall be light about us. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.”

Third, We must think of Him as *incomprehensible*. His garments are mysteries. The secrets of His wisdom and counsels are impenetrable to created eyes and understandings. The armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth may sit in council together, but the mystery and infinitude of His majesty and glory cannot be measured. The Cherubim and Seraphim, in an extacy of wonder and adoration, bow before His throne, crying out, for ever and ever, “Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory.” Who is He? “Who can, by searching, find out God?” Sublime and eternal Being,

thou art indeed alone in the mystery of thy glory and majesty ! The fullness thereof is participated in by none, communicated to none. Dark, unfathomable, infinite, incomprehensible Being, thou alone understandest Thyself, thy ways and thy thoughts ! All else see but a ray of thee, and they are lost in its ineffable effulgence and completely dazzled by its brightness. "Canst thou by searching find out God ? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection ? It is as high as heaven ; what canst thou do ? deeper than hell ; what canst thou know ? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea. If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder Him ?"

Fourth, He is an immortal and invisible spirit—"the King of Kings and Lord of Lords"—the Author of life—the centre and source of immortality—the only possessor of endless life, which He imparts to His creatures as the fruits of His promises, He dwells in that light, which no man can approach, for its source is in the throne of Him "whom no man hath seen at any time," and whom "no man can see and live." He is a spirit, immortal and invisible, demanding that all should worship Him in "spirit and truth." He is that invisible Spirit and immortal God who demanded of the Jews, by the prophet, "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off ? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him ? Do not I fill heaven and earth ? saith the Lord."

Fifth, He is ALMIGHTY—the Creator and Preserver of the universe—"the God of all flesh," to whom all things were, are, and ever will be possible. He made all things, visible and invisible, of things in heaven and in earth. He is the Father of spirits, in whom all move, live, and have their being—the Judge of all men, who holds under control and sustains all the concerns of this boundless universe, and with whom are the issues of life and death. Listen to his words, uttered of old : "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," "and there is none other besides Him." He is the Father of us all, who hath given us one faith and one baptism.

We must not only think of God as thus described, but as a father to us by right of creation and conservation. Consider, too, the tender claims He has on us by the right of adoption in His Son Jesus Christ, who hath purchased for us "the means of grace and the hope of glory"—the Author and Finisher of our salvation—with whom redemption originated, and by whom it was so wisely and wonderfully perfected. He is the perfection of tenderness and love ; One whose very Name is Love and Mercy, for His mercy is over all His works, and His love is manifested to all men in the inestimable gift of His only begotten Son—emptying heaven itself, as it were, of its glory, that man might enjoy its saving light and know the way to everlasting felicity. He is our Judge—the Master of the household, who must, ere long, come to call us to an account of our stewardships and award us

the meed of our true service or of our ingratitude and treachery. These, my brethren, are but a few of the ways in which we are commanded to have the Lord God as the subject of our thoughts and meditations—only a few of the many ways in which He has condescended to offer Himself to us as the rock of our faith, the object of our best hopes and fears, of our love and praise.

We notice another way in which we are commanded to have the Lord for our God. He must be the object, the only object of all our worship, service and homage. As in thinking of Him so is it in worship. Every subject worthy thereof must be served in a manner suitable to its nature and dignity. A respect must be paid consistent with its character ere it can be served with propriety. We say nothing here of that curious doctrine which identifies all kinds of service with a kind of worship. When we HAVE the Lord God as the object or the Being to whom we must pay homage, all the services therein implied, whether obedience, prayer, praise, fear, hope, or faith, can at once, without fear of error, be resolved into worship proper. But worship, of which we are speaking, in order to be acceptable, proper, and consistent, must be in keeping with God's nature and character, as revealed to us. God being One, our worship of Him must be undivided and entire. The heart, while thus engaged, must have no seam or rent. As the Saviour's coat, when lots were cast for it, became the sole property of the winner, so the heart, in God's worship, must not be given partly to the world and partly to God. He being One Almighty Spirit, the soul, the mind and the body must go together, in their entire strength, with their utmost force, will and love, to pay Him that true and spiritual worship which the nature of the case necessarily demands. Nothing of the carnal, nothing of the worldly may enter into it, for such would offend the majesty of His Spirit, as being destructive of that service which He can receive. He being an unchangeable Spirit, our worship of Him must be permanently and thoroughly consistent; to-day, to-morrow, and until the end, it must not vary. Our public worship must harmonize with our private; the same spirit must pervade it under all circumstances, in all places, and at all times; because He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. It must aim alway to please Him, for He is Almighty, therefore able to punish; it must have especial respect unto His glory and honor, for He cannot be dishonored, and of His glory He is extremely jealous. It must be conducted and continued according to His will, for His will is Supreme, and that of man a blind guide. Being the perfection of wisdom and intelligence, our worship of Him must be intelligent and reasonable; we must pray and sing to Him with understanding and with a good heart and faithful conscience, because he cannot be mocked. Being the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, our worship of Him must be

humble and sincere—our attitude and manner becoming the great difference between God and man; it, too, must be calm and steady, for His tabernacles are habitations of peace, where all tumult is hushed, all storms calmed. In a word, God must be the subject of our worship in no other sense than as the Gospel reveals Him to us and as our enlightened consciences would dictate. Hence, the sum total of the duty which this branch of the commandments requires of us is this: “To believe in God, to love and fear Him with all our mind and strength, to honor Him, to trust in Him, to call upon Him and obey Him.”

The first branch, then, of this law thus requires us to have the Lord for our God. But, secondly, it commands us to have none other God or Gods, with, without, or besides Him. This not only covers what has already been considered, but also, either indirectly or by implication, forbids *Atheism* in all its features—all infidelity, absolute (if, indeed, such a thing can be) and partial—all skepticism, either practical or speculative—all such doctrines as really oppose, in part, or in whole, the fundamentals of the Christian faith, and all the multitude of latitudinarian heterodoxes which clash with “the form of sound words once delivered to the saints” and to the careful guardianship of God’s spouse—the Church.

You may, probably, think it strange that a law which presupposes the non-existence of any but one God should be promulgated to prohibit man from *having* that which does not, and, from the very nature of things, could not exist. But this is by no means strange; for, at the time it was promulgated, the sin of idolatry (a sin which, you know, consists in the worship of false Gods to the exclusion of the true) was very prevalent, not only among the Gentiles but also among the Jews. Hence, although the commandment is grounded upon the eternal truth, that there is only One God, yet the Lord deemed its promulgation necessary to the suppression of a sin which militates against this truth, which was, and is, and ever will be self-evident to all well-thinking and properly disposed men.

But this law presupposes another truth, that covers man with shame and guilt: man will devise ways and means, of himself, to substitute false Gods for the true. To meet this detestable sin was this law principally given. For illustration—we will take money, which, I am sorry to say, amongst us has already gained the name of God, viz: “*the almighty dollar.*” Do we not see that men think of it as they should think of God? Do they not worship it in fact, although not in form, as God ought to be worshipped? Are they not governed by it? Do they not trust in it and to it? Do they not call upon it, serve for it and serve it, believe in it, bless it, weep when deprived of it, rejoice when possessed of it—spend their whole time, their strength, their faculties, their energies, in its pursuit? Do they not pray to it, and sing songs to its praise? In a word, do not

men love it, with all their heart, with all their mind, with all their soul, and with all their strength? Now, in this way, anything may be substituted in our hearts for God. And how many things are thus substituted for Him! not alone money, but the endless varieties of the vanities which make up the fashion of this world. But the worship or the service paid to the thing, whatever it may be, by no means makes it God, but substitutes it for God to the worshipper. The commandment merely supposes the possibility—nay, the great probability of men becoming so blind and debased as to pay their love and homage to worthless and senseless objects. Its very promulgation tells a mournful and dreadful tale: that men have, in all ages, sought out gods of their own invention. They will continue so to do until time shall be no more.

But it presupposes something more, from which even good men are in danger: the possibility that a wild superstition, some favorite tenet of belief, some darling and carefully fostered prejudice, some curious opinion, some certain form of worship, certain kinds of preachers and preaching, certain denominational leanings, likings and hatings—and an endless variety of other worthless and unreasonable things—may supplant the Lord God in the human heart; may receive the love, the affection, the service, the honor, the trust, the labors—nay, even the worship, which should be bestowed upon Him. This is a sin, of all others, which does the most despite to the honor and dignity of the great I AM—a sin which discloses the deepest degree of iniquity. This sin of sins is not only barely possible, but, alas, almost inevitable, in consequence of man's depravity. Behold, then, the stern and dreadful truth, that unmitigated, unqualified idolatry not only existed among the Jews—that people of the stiff neck and hard heart—but also, in a peculiar and dangerous form, amongst ourselves, a people who are professedly Christian.

We must talk now about ourselves, since the few hints we have delivered are sufficient to let us know where we stand. I by no means intended to give you any learned disquisitions, even if I were able. My intention is merely to treat each of these laws in detail, as they may apply to our peculiar case and circumstances. Merely to say that idolatry is possible in our case, is to sidle up to the truth with the tardy footsteps of the coward. Why not come boldly up to the fact at once? We say that idolatry is here, in our very midst, and the land groans under its infernal weight. Can it be possible—aye, can it be a fact, that a crime which we imagined confined to the heathen and the pagan is committed amongst, or by us? Our blindness to the truth, our insensibility to the damning fact, are much more than mere presumptions that God is baring His arm to smite us for the crime of idolatry. And is idolatry defacing our character as a Christian people in the sight of God and the Christianized

world, while the trumpet of the Gospel is blown up and down our very streets? I say it is possible; it is the fact; and I challenge contradiction. Heathendom is cursed with the *form* as well as with the *reality* of idolatry. Here the mere *form* is wanting, but we are as truly cursed with the reality. A coppersmith of old, in order to sustain the interests of his craft, appealed against rising Christianity to his countrymen, saying that the temples of Diana were being forgotten. This is idolatry complaining of the true religion. But, alas, now the tune is completely changed. The men of God, who are jealous of their Master's honor and of the welfare of human souls, must reiterate the coppersmith's complaint almost word for word. Behold, the temples of the living God are all but forgotten; the worshippers are few and cold; strange gods are come among us. You will say, "Hold, preacher; your language is unguarded; you are harsh and splenetic, and you exaggerate." Let the blind and careless guide, let the superb and self-righteous Pharisee, who will pander to the vanity and prejudices of the people for the sake of being called Rabbi, and for the sake of "WINE AND OIL," pronounce this language splenetic—I care not. Look for yourselves. Behold, are not our gods hung up on the wall? if not, do they not sleep in our coffers? Hath not the almighty dollar more interest for us than an invitation of divine love, or a thundered threat of divine wrath? Are not our hearts completely closed to the voice of Him who feeds and clothes, sustains and blesses us? There is no use in disguising matters; our households are fairly crammed with strange gods; and no amount of teaching or warning, no style of threatening, no manner of persuading, can wean our affections from them. If, my brethren, it be otherwise, wherefore this wild tumult, this desolating tempest that hath riven our society into tatters? Wherefore this cry for gold, gold, gold? Wherefore this rush to the house of pleasure, to the neglect of everything else which peradventure might lead us to God? Why this neglect and disrespectful treatment of the true God's disciples? Is it because they are not the devotees of Baal? Why has the public mart superseded the holy temple, and the oath-ringings saloon the church? Why has God's altar grown dusty, through neglect, while our desks are glazed with our daily worship upon them? Why is the Bible laid by, a prey to the worm and cobweb, while the novel, the newspaper, and, above all, the *ledger*, are in constant and greedy requisition? Why are all places resorted to, on Sunday as well as other days, but the house of God? Why is the great Name of the Architect of the universe mocked and made light of in our streets, and blasphemed in our very houses? Why is religion derided and all but overthrown among us? Why are honesty and confidence between man and man often completely destroyed? Why is blasphemy so exceedingly rife and loose-tongued, and why has it lost its horrors and terrors to us?

Do we not boast of being a Christian, a free and enlightened people? Why, then, have theft, robbery, and murder become the merest incidents—more frequent than the accidents of fire and flood? Why are the graveyards of our cities filled with the dust of the slaughtered, and our mountains covered with the bones of the slain? Is it, my brethren, because we have the Lord for our God? Oh, vain mockery, vile presumption, impertinent pretension! Get ye gone; let every man to his tent! “Ichabod, Ichabod; the glory of Israel is departed;” the ark of the Lord is with the enemy; He dwells here no more! Baal, your God, is pursuing the chase upon your mountains, and you dream of safety while he seems awake; but soon he shall lay him down to sleep, to wake no more. And when the day of your calamity cometh, his ear shall become an ear of stone to your cry, and his eye an eye of brass to your supplicating tear. Show me a society disorganized—a community stained by all nameless and hideous enormities. Let my ear be assailed by the curse of the oppressed and the maledictions of the ruined; let me hear the alarm of midnight, as well as noonday murder and assassination—the lewd howl of the midnight prowler and debauchee. Show me the gambling-hell, with doors wide open in the full light of day, and crowds rushing in and out. Point me to group after group of jeering idlers, to empty churches, to starving and distressed ministers, and to broken and abused Sundays; to stacks of ill-gotten wealth, in the shape of glittering coin, and to heaps of rags, the wages of dissipation and crime—all in juxtaposition. Let me hear the discordant notes of frenzied and prurient rejoicing mingle with the plaintive strains of want, penury and suffering, and with the startling yells of despair. Then—oh, then, I will point you to idolatry. For with such, God cannot dwell; and where God is not, there must be false gods; and where there are false gods, there is confusion, disorganization, darkness and chaos, the terrible companions of idolatry.

But, ye recreant children of Israel, hear, I say; yet again God speaks from amid the thunders and the fires of the troubled Mount, “I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” Hear Him, and halt no longer between two opinions. Hear Him; for he proclaims Himself this day, to be not only *your* God, if you will have Him as such, but he recalls your faded and benighted recollections to the stupendous fact that He is your Deliverer. As by magic, then, let the scene at Bethlehem, irradiated by the star, come up before you. Let the Mount of Calvary, the tragedy of the Cross, and the expiring groans come up from the history of His sufferings. Let the sun appear darkened with pity and shame, the graves opened and the rocks rent; the burial, the seal, and the armed watch; the descent of the angel, the rolling away of the stone, and the Victor over hell and the grave

coming forth from His tomb ; the ascension, the cloud as a chariot, and the comforting visit of the angel ; the session at the right hand of power, the intercession, and the gift of the Holy Spirit ; the gates of heaven thrown wide open, and the rays of the Sun of Righteousness and of the King of Glory piercing the habitations of darkness and wo, and the prince of torments subdued and overwhelmed. Let all this awful and stupendous work of deliverance sweep itself before the visions of your souls, and then say if it be not a sufficient ground and argument why you should have the Lord for your God, and none besides Him ? Look again, before closing with your fate, on the broad array of sublime promises made to you by Him. Stand in front of them, even with your hearts steeled into adamant ; are they not beyond your brightest dreams of bliss ? Do they not outstrip your most lofty imaginations ? Do they not shine bright enough to turn the starless night, in which your panting soul dwells, into a blazing noon ? If then you will not receive Him as your delivering God, with all this before you, then, then prepare to receive Him as an avenging and judging God. Turn the page ; trace that dark, dreadful, astounding line of threats which His own fingers have written, and which He hath sworn will not pass away, even should the heavens and the earth tumble into ruins. Read them ; treasure them ; remember them ; hang upon them ; for they speak of misery and sufferings which the tongue or pen of angel cannot portray. To-day, while he speaks, harden not your hearts, but have none other Gods but the Lord, "who brought us out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

SERMON III.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

TEXT—Exodus xx, 4, 5 and 6: “*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.*”

MY BRETHREN: I have already laid before you a brief exposition of the first law of the Decalogue; which legislates for the “worship of God, and of Him only.” I would fain trust that the humble, but earnest effort, has not been in vain.

To-day, we listen to the second law of this great divine and moral code. Let us pray to Him for the spirit of fear, reverence, and understanding; that our habitual apathy, coldness and ignorance, may henceforth give place to the spirit of obedience.

The second commandment, though not so explicit as to the object of worship, is yet promulgated on the ground or strength of the first. It is given on the presumption that men have obeyed that, i. e., that they have the Lord for their God, and none besides Him; and desire to pay Him alone, the particular worship stipulated. Hence, it especially legislates the *manner* of this worship, rather than the *OBJECT* or nature thereof. In a manner, this second law may be called a *thora*, as including the first by implication; a *misna*, as being a continuation, or a kind of copy of it. It is a *Deuteronomy*, as being a repetition or recapitulation of the first, and as embracing a partial explanation thereof. We will therefore see, as we advance step by step up this wonderful ladder of obedience, that a brighter and still brighter beam, from the lamp of the Lord, sheds itself upon our souls, until the duty of entire obedience, in its object, nature and manner, bursts full upon our souls in its awful perfection. Each step we take, the nearer we draw to the habitations of the angels, where the glass through which we now see God darkly, will be removed from our faces.

What then, is to be the *manner* of this worship, which God demands in the law before us? The commandment itself, by prohibiting what is inconsistent with the manner of *worship proper*, is a full and sufficient answer.

1st. We are prohibited from making any *IMAGE* of God of whatever kind; even should our intention be to worship Him through it, in it, or by it. Here is a rule without exception—a restriction upon that general rule, that it is the *motive*, the *intent*, or the *design* which constitutes an action, either virtuous or vicious, innocent or criminal. You will perceive that the strong and exclusive expression, “*ANY*,” in the commandment, not only prohibits all images of God of whatsoever kind; but also does away with every justification for them, even when grounded on the motive, intention, or the design of thereby worshipping God.

God is revealed to us as possessing all the infinite attributes which are necessary and essential to the subsistence of the Supreme Being. We must, therefore, briefly enquire into the case, in order that we may see how utterly impossible it is that God can be worshipped, in any manner whatever, either in, through, or by images; how utterly repugnant and contrary to the spirit of the law, such worship should be; how thoroughly dishonorable and derogatory it would be to the nature and majesty of God, and therefore how awfully dangerous and destructive the practice of such worship would prove to ourselves.

We will take it for granted for a moment, that we make images of God, with the motive only of worshipping God through or by them. God being omniscient, i. e., possessing the highest and fullest perfection of all wisdom and intelligence; an image inanimate, having neither wisdom nor intelligence in any degree at all, and an image animate which we can *choose* though not *make*, having only these attributes in a very limited degree; it is a simple impossibility, that a being who is omniscient, can be worthily and acceptably worshipped by either. The very nature of the case implies its absolute impossibility. An Omniscient Being must be worshipped *immediately* and not *mediately*, if He is to be worshipped at all. If this Omniscient Being should or could receive *mediate* worship, it would suppose that He could not know that He was worshipped, unless these mediums were supplied as means to the acquisition of His knowledge; thus implying the possibility of omniscience receiving acquisitions of knowledge, which is a simple impossibility. But, if God should see fit to receive *mediate* worship, then from the considerations above, we may see that He would not only be doing, what in truth would be unworthy of and dishonorable to Himself, but confessing that creatures of His own hand must supply the mediums through which knowledge of worship would be conveyed to Him. Hence, this knowledge would depend upon the will and caprice of man; which

would at once, and forever destroy all notion or idea of omniscience. It is therefore impossible, we maintain, that God can receive image worship, since it is simply impossible for Him to do despite to any of His perfections. This being so, then image worship is also an impossibility; for nothing is worship of God, but what He can consistently with his nature receive as such. This is but a rough feature of one of the many arguments which might be used to show the truth of our conclusion.

But let our conclusion be right or wrong; let the assertion that image worship is an impossibility, when addressed to such a Being, as is the Eternal Jehovah, be viewed only as an assertion, we can produce a short argument from Holy Scripture which puts an end to all controversy: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." This is the positive duty laid down in the law under consideration. Proper worship then, is that of "SPIRIT AND TRUTH." The very nature of the case, therefore, demands that the creature must not only possess sufficient intelligence, but must have *spirit* to worship in spirit; and knowledge of the truth, that it may worship in truth. The Being to be worshipped, is a Spirit, superior in every attribute to the spirit worshipping; hence no other worship but that of the spirit of the worshipper can be acceptable to Him, because any other kind addressed to Him, would be no worship at all. But an image, as is self-evident, has no spirit; therefore it of itself can neither address spirit worship to another, nor in any sense be a medium through which such worship can be addressed to an intelligent being. An image has no reason, knowledge nor understanding of any worship; far less, if possible, of that kind to which "spirit and truth" are necessary. An image then can address no worship whatever of itself; and by consequence cannot be a medium, or a mean whereby others can worship an all knowing and all intelligent God.

Image worship is not only an impossibility on these grounds. It is derogatory to the majesty and honor of the Supreme Being. In the first place, it is in direct opposition to His express will. In the commandment before us, it is sternly and unequivocally prohibited; and the contrary thereto is forcibly and positively inculcated. Strange and fearful curses are attached to the one; comforting and sublime promises to the other. This at once shows us the utter futility of attempting to worship God by images; He cannot receive it because it is opposed to His revealed will; and, as its reward is expressed in startling denunciations throughout holy writ, we learn that it is an open and heinous onslaught upon the honor of the Most High. This position requires but little comment; for we know that whatever runs counter to the Supreme will in this particular, assails God in that point, about which He expresses Himself as being extremely jealous. *No worship at all* is not so frequently or so sternly denounced, as is image

worship. The one is mere disobedience—the other disobedience, accompanied by mockery of God, and willful self deception.

We now assert farther that, to make an image of God, that we may thereby worship Him, irrespective of all other considerations, is a *superior* way, so to speak, of dishonoring God. God the Almighty, infinite, invisible, eternal, omnipresent and omniscient Spirit—the Trinity in Unity and the Unity in Trinity, is especially and grievously dishonored, by any visible tangible or external shape or representation. As God, and in no other way can we conceive Him, and as such He has no image, no figure, no likeness, or similitude; no dimension or shape whatever. He cannot therefore be represented in any sense whatever, by an image or images. To reduce the likeness of God, i. e. God Himself, to that which is his infinite opposite—an image or idol, the work of a weak and finite creature, presupposes and directly teaches that the Supreme Being is visible, finite and comprehensible—that He is a being of parts and passions like His own creatures. Thus would the eternal majesty of Jehovah God be shorn of its brightest and most glorious rays.

Some wise, even in their blindness, say that God made an image of Himself, in that he made man; for so say the Scriptures: and, that the Jews, in the days of Pontius Pilate, beheld the express image of God in the MAN Jesus, who was a conception of the Holy Ghost. Hence, they argue that since images were made of God, and that too by God Himself, we cannot be doing much wrong in following His example, by making such images of Him, as we are able: and, that since revelation calls upon us to worship Him through this *express image* of Him, this MAN Jesus, our boldness in worshipping God, through the images we may make of Him, cannot be such a heinous crime as is represented. Of course, this is the infidel and the scoffer with a lance in his hand thrusting at the “Rock of Ages”—the ignorant jeerer, entering the lists against Jehovah, with Satan as his Esquire, and the trumpet of hell sounding the challenge.

We will pass over the distinctions between “Graven images” and all other kinds of images, and say a few words as to how man is an image of God; and how the MAN Jesus is the express image of the Father; for purposes you will easily discover.

“In His own IMAGE created he them,” is a style of expression, which I hesitate not to affirm, means the contrary to what the mere player upon words deduces from it. It means, that God created man in His own *image*, without any reference whatever to man’s external shape or visible figure; but to his intellectual part, which, properly speaking, has no image, shape, or form whatever. Since then God and the soul of man thus spoken of, have nothing of what we understand to be essential to an image, nor indeed can they, so long as they preserve their identity, which must be forever,

we must conclude that the term image, whenever it is used with reference to either, is figurative and peculiar. It is often employed in this way, to reveal to the children of one common and fallen parent, the fact that man was originally created in the image of God, having that perfection of innocence, which caused him, before the fall, to be a *reflection* of the Glory of his Creator. So far and no farther, can man be said to have been created in the image of his Creator. So far, he was really and truly in the likeness of God. So near and no nearer did he subsist as God does. In man's body then, there can be no image of God; and if not there, there can be no artificial representation of Him at all; for the external form of man gives us our highest and most perfect ideas of similitude and figure. "In His own image created He them;" i. e. He created their souls in the subsistence of perfect innocence; and this similitude to God in man still exists, though by no means in the same degree of perfection. Hence, when scripture or divines speak of the image of God in man, we are to understand them as referring either to the *natural* or *moral* image. The *natural* means the faculties of the soul—the reason, understanding and will. The *moral* is the proper, or right use of these faculties, the end of which is *holiness* or *innocence*. The quibbling scoffer's shaft, so far then, has been used in vain.

Man was created in the "IMAGE;" but the man Jesus was not created, but came in the "EXPRESS IMAGE" of God. This entirely alters the case. He who was in "THE FORM OF GOD," came and took upon Himself "THE FORM OF A SERVANT." Now, what may reasonably be asserted concerning the FORM or *express image* of God, may also, exegetically be asserted concerning "THE FORM OF A SERVANT." To be in "the form of God," will suffer no other construction, than to subsist really as God—in fact, to be really and truly God. To have the express image of the omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient God, is none else than to be omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. To subsist in these perfections is to have the "form of God;" or to be God Himself; because, God cannot subsist in any other form than in His attributes; and he who subsists in them, must be God indeed. "He took upon Himself the FORM of a servant." Here exactly, is the same doctrine laid down with respect to the man Jesus' manhood, as the former sentiment declares of His Godhead." It means nothing more than that He became really and truly a servant, in the fashion of man. He was incarnate or made in the *likeness* of man, that He might be in a capacity to serve both God and man, by dying for sinners; and thereby accomplishing the redemption of the world.

I have made this digression, to show you that God never made an image of Himself, in the sense advanced by the enemy of revelation; nor did He sanction the worship of any image; nor the worship of Himself in,

through, or by any image ; because, He can never be known, or seen as He subsists, in His perfections in any outward or substantial representation were this possible. God can be PRESENTED, but never REPRESENTED ; and any passage in scripture which apparently advances the possibility of such representation, we will find, when fairly and reasonably construed, teaches the simple impossibility of the thing. Hence the utter absurdity and foolishness of any such attempt. As no one can CREATE, or be the maker of any animate creature but God ; of course the images that men attempt to make of Him are graven or molten—at all events inanimate. This says virtually, that the Lord's essence, which cannot be participated in by any creature, is communicable, and communicated to that, which by nature cannot receive it, being utterly unworthy. If the image could, by any possibility, receive the essence of Deity, then it would subsist as God ; and we would be justified, nay it would be our bounden duty to address to it divine worship. This would destroy all idea of divinity, and annihilate for ever all hope, belief and faith. It would detract from the character of Deity, all that is essential to it ; and the whole completeness and perfection of God would be destroyed. There could be no God whatever, which is the hope of the fool. The attempt then to image God, either by the substitution of an idol in His room, or by making a supposed representation of Him, both acts being the same in nature and tendency, is nothing less than to attempt to strip the Eternal of all His attributes—not the least of which is *invisibility*—and to render him an object of contempt, rather than of worship and adoration. This dreadful thing can indeed never be consummated ; yet nothing can be more fraught with danger and terror than the bare attempt—nothing be more hurtful to those who are guilty of making it. Whatever would lead to it, can be excused or justified on no pretence, by no design, or motive whatever ; God having no similitude, that which would give it Him dishonors Him. What would dishonor God is beyond description dangerous and hurtful, for He is extremely jealous of that HONOR.

To be "*left alone*" to one's idols, i. e. to be permitted to worship and trust to them, is a judgment which involves the most awful and terrific consequences. There is no sin against divinity, which is so frequently, so sternly, so deliberately, and so carefully denounced and prohibited. And why ? Because of its extreme danger, and of the sure and sudden penalties which follow.

I will only cite a very few passages of scripture, to impress this upon you, and then proceed with the other portions of the subject. "TAKE GOOD HEED unto yourselves (for ye saw no manner of similitude, on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire,) lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any

figure, the likeness of male or female. Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven." "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him? Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. To whom then will ye liken me or shall I be EQUAL? saith the Holy One. Therefore speak unto the people and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God, Every man of the house of Israel, that setteth up his idols in his heart and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet, I the Lord, WILL ANSWER him that cometh, according to the multitude of his idols." "Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten images; I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD." Here, my brethren, we see the terrors of God's right hand, and his swift judgments arrayed against the making or putting of idols in the room of God; and of making images of God; either to worship them, or to worship God through them.

Perhaps it would be well to say a few words with respect to what is *worship proper*, as contradistinguished from image worship, before proceeding to the second portion of the commandment. Worship, in the true sense of the word, is a spiritual exercise—what the Latins call *CULTUS DEI*, i. e. (though not literally) "religion." It implies a due sense of obligation, grounded on a knowledge of benefits received, as well as of respect, veneration, and homage due to God from us. Its three great branches are Prayer, Praise and Thanksgiving, to each or all of which may be referred the two great duties, FAITH and OBEDIENCE. This constitutes the TRUE RELIGION. Praise and thanksgiving are said to be simple branches of worship; they have their one object, God. We PRAISE God for all His works—we THANK Him for His goodness alone. But prayer is a complex, or compound branch of worship; though it has only the same object as the other. It implies *adoration* which is a worship of itself; *confession* which is another kind; supplication which is another; intercession which is another; *thanksgiving* and *invocation* which are also kinds of worship; pleading, dedication, deprecation and blessing which are other kinds. It also implies BELIEF in God, FAITH in His promises and CONTEMPLATION of His perfections; also earnest, frequent and regular DESIRES for the enjoyment of Him. It has its *kinds*, its *matter*, its *manner*, its *method*, its *expression* and its *forms*. We can now see the absurdity of image worship, for we can have no sense of obligation, grounded on a knowledge of bene-

fits received from them ; nor of any respect, veneration, and homage due by us to them. They are unworthy objects of worship as well as incapable mediums. We cannot *praise* them, because they cannot perform any works. We cannot *thank* them, because they can neither love nor hate us ; we cannot *pray* to them in *adoration*, because they cannot impress us with any sense of greatness or goodness—in *confession*, because we cannot sin against them, and because we ourselves are greater than they—in *supplication*, because they cannot pardon or bless us, in any way whatever—in *intercession*, because they can do as little for our neighbors as for ourselves—in *invocation*, because it would be horrible blasphemy, to give them any of the names of God ; the name of God is God Himself—in *pleading*, because they are incapable of appreciating humility and fervency ; or of hearing or weighing argument—in *deprecation*, because they cannot foresee evils nor avert them—in *blessing*, because there is no matter of joy in them, nor can they bestow upon us any mercies whatever. As it is irrational to worship images, so would it be to worship any creature, however exalted. The highest stands to us in no relation, and has no claims upon us, which would require from us the praise and thanksgiving due to God. No creature then can be an object of prayer ; for although it may be capable of hearing prayer, yet it cannot answer in any suitable manner to our condition. It will refuse adoration, from a sense of its own littleness and unworthiness. It will turn away from confession, because its forgiveness cannot blot out iniquity. It may hear supplication, but it has neither the power to save us, nor to avert impending evils. It may listen to invocation, but will not be a partaker in blasphemy, by receiving the names of God, thereby making God of itself. This is not all. A creature, whether it be angel, spirit, departed saint, or living man, cannot be a suitable medium through whom, or in whom God is to be worshipped by another worshipper. God has declared, that, He despises not the sighing of the broken and contrite heart, of which Himself being omniscient is immediately cognizant ; which fact supercedes all necessity for mediums of worship. God can be and is present with an embodied spirit here, on earth, to listen to its praises and desires ; as well as with a disembodied spirit, in heaven. An embodied spirit on earth, can address a Being who fills all places and all time, as well as can the disembodied. One can worship *immediately* as well as the other. What is possible to one man's spirit in worship, is possible to another's. If God be omnipresent and omniscient, He can receive immediately all worship, whether it be offered in heaven or on earth. Why then employ images, idols or creatures as mediums ?

We proceed to consider the second portion of this commandment, which prohibits us from making the likeness of anything "in heaven, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth," for purposes of worship.

The first forbids us to make any image or images of God whatever, with or without design. The second implies the permission to make them of whatever can be thus aptly and properly represented, if our object be not to pay them worship. We are only permitted to do this, not commanded ; and it may be well to inquire very briefly, if this permission extends to the introduction of images of saints, &c., as accompaniments, as ornaments, or as anything else but essentials into divine worship, public or private. We all know that it is a scandal and an offence to true worship, to introduce aught that is carnal, or to interlard it with images in any way. According to one of the rules to be observed in the exposition of the Decalogue, we are not only to avoid that which is expressly and generally forbidden ; but also to the utmost of our ability, everything which would endanger the commission of that which is prohibited. The making of images, being the first step to idolatry ; the attaching of them to divine worship, being the second ; and only another step being necessary to its completion ; it seems very clear, that, although we are permitted to make images of persons and things, which can be properly and aptly represented by them, yet we are by no means permitted either to make them with a view to introduce them into worship, or to mix them up with the same. The first step towards the thing forbidden, is as strongly prohibited as the last ; and so are the intervening ones. Whatever tends to, or endangers image worship then, is contrary to the intention and spirit of this law. When, then, we find images attached to divine worship, on the pretence that they are only ornaments, incitements, or auxiliaries thereto, we are to avoid such worship ; because the habit of worshipping, IN THE PRESENCE OF IMAGES, is full of danger. We shall soon find that we cannot worship God without they be in our presence, or that, we will insensibly come to serve the image, instead of God, or worship God through it. Habit is every thing in such a case as this. The ignorant especially, have but few safeguards against idolatry when they acquire the habit of worshipping *in the presence of images*. Are not, then, the images of Christ's manhood, (for his Godhead cannot be imaged,) of the Cross, of the Virgin Mary, of the Canonized Saints, &c., permissible in divine worship ? I pretend not the ability to break a lance with the learned Doctors of Rome. My conceit or self-righteousness will not blind me to the fact, that generally speaking, these Doctors are not only learned in the law, but also are striving to obey it. What, then, can be said with respect to the use of such images in the Roman Church ? Are they permissible, or not ? Is the Church of Rome guilty of idolatry or not ? The spiritual worship, required by this commandment, cannot, in my opinion, be addressed to God, by the aid of images ; and if so, the law clearly pronounces them intolerable. We are certainly permitted to make such images ; but strictly prohibited from using them, in any way, which

would conduce to idolatry. But attaching them to divine worship is doing something, (to say the least of it) very like conducing to the thing forbidden. Hence they should be discarded from worship altogether, on the principle that we should "avoid the appearance of evil;" and lest they should become a stumbling block to the ignorant. But, the Church of Rome is said to address worship, viz.: PRAYER and PRAISE to the departed souls of those represented in her images, and to invoke the Virgin and Saints. If this be so, (which many of her communion choose to deny) then she is not merely guilty of taking God's name in vain, by blasphemy; but also of an intrenchment of the first commandment, in that she has more Gods than one. If she be guilty of worshipping images, or of attempting to worship God, or to serve God by the aid of images, which is also charged against her, then she is guilty of an infringement of the second commandment—her worship cannot be spiritual or reasonable; but carnal and dishonorable to God, and contrary to His expressed will. If the justification, that "she only worships in the presence of images," be the only one she has to offer, she by no means clears herself from the dangerous effects which this habit produces; for, if it be necessary to worship "in the presence of images," that the worship may become acceptable to God, then God is surely worshipped in, through or by images in some way; which has been proved to be an impossibility—and God, although a Spirit, never intended that he should be worshipped "in spirit and in truth; for *MEDIATE* worship through images cannot be such. It follows that the law, on this subject, is without point or meaning; and if it be so in this particular, why not in every particular. The result would be that there is no law; hence no obedience. But if images are unnecessary to divine worship, why then, are they used in it? The practice is seen to be very dangerous. The design or motive may be good, but it will not overcome the necessary danger; far less supercede the implied prohibition of the custom in the law. That indeed can not be necessary to divine worship, which certainly tends to render it unworthy and dishonorable, and thereby utterly to destroy it.

The positive duty, which is commanded in this law, not only repudiates all kinds of images in divine worship, but calls upon us for the extreme contrary—the worship of the "spirit and the truth." This law, like most of the others, is accompanied with certain explanatory reasons for its enforcement, and with certain threats and promises. The reasons are simply these, that "God is a jealous God"—"that He will not suffer His glory to be given to another; neither His praise to graven images." There is a peculiarity in the penalties and threats here set forth. The general threat is, that "God shall visit the sins of the fathers, upon the children, even to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him;" i. e. the

idolatrous children of idolatrous parents. The blessing promised is, that "He will show mercy unto thousands, in them that love Him and keep his commandments." This phraseology does not mean that God will punish one person for the sins of another, or that He will punish the child for the sins of the father. This would be inconsistent with His justice. The commandment says, that God will "visit the sins upon the children," not punish the children for the sins of the father. We find this visitation spoken of in the case of all the Jewish and Israelitish captivities. Captivity seems to have been the temporal penalty, attached to the infringement of this particular law; and it is, no doubt, what is literally meant in the words of the commandment. For in every case in which this chosen people of God was led away into captivity, it was especially on account of their idolatry. Hence the children of those led away captive, became heirs to the captivity; not as a punishment upon the children, for the sins of their parents, if they themselves abstained from the sin; but as a warning to abstain from hardening their hearts, as their fathers had done before them. This punishment, of captivity, being less or more perpetual; of course the children of the sinful parents were visited by the consequences of their father's crimes; but certainly not as a punishment; for the children could not be punished for sins they had not committed. However, that sin must indeed be dreadfully heinous, for which a temporal penalty was inflicted, which visited with calamity, even the third and fourth generation. If the temporal penalty was such, what indeed must the eternal penalty be? An overwhelming deluge of fury and indignation.

We, my brethren, are under a spiritual dispensation which requires but little ceremony in the worship which it stipulates. The thing forbidden us in this law is much more easily committed than we may suppose. We must remember, that although the Jews, in their religious economy, were but a type of ourselves, yet this sin of sins, if committed by us, will not only be visited here with as severe temporal punishment as captivity, but hereafter, with the eternal wrath of God. God has often proved Himself a jealous God to us; for when we turned to the idols and images which we reared in our hearts, He bared His arm and stript us naked. We are, indeed, too enlightened to make graven or molten images of God, or of any thing else, either to worship them, or worship God through, in, or by them; but, since God is so very jealous of His honor, may He not have discovered that we have given to some object of ambition, to wealth, to power, to friends, to the world, to the flesh and to the fleeting fashion of this world, all the affection, all the glory, all the praise, homage and worship, which are due to Him alone? May He not say to us, that we have come to the prophets with our idols set up in our hearts, and the stumbling block of our iniquity before our faces? May he not bring the awful charge against

us, that our service to Him is founded, or would be founded upon unworthy conditions ; and that we could not worship Him at all, if we had not these conditions as so many images, through which, and on account of which we serve Him ? Look within, my brethren, to the idols of your hearts and spirits. Is not the language of your bosom, "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry ; add drunkenness to thirst ; for the imaginations of my heart are my Gods, and them only will I serve and worship." Beware, beware, lest these spiritual images gain the dominion over you, and you come under God's outraged honor.

SERMON IV.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

TEXT—Exodus xx, 7 : *"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."*

The third commandment, just read, is the next necessary step, in the upward ladder of our duty to God. We might have the Lord for our God, and serve Him only, worshipping Him in the manner stipulated, and yet by no means give due honor and reverence to many things which properly relate and belong to Him. Hence the necessity of this third law, which we now proceed to consider.

We have here special mention made of the Name of God, as embracing and including all things that belong or relate to Him—hence, as signifying God Himself, and none or nothing else besides Him. It is this glorious and fearful name of the Lord God, which Moses commanded the Israelites to fear, under the pain of "wonderful plagues." David, in an outburst of holy rapture, speaks thus to the people : "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name, for His voice is upon many waters. The Lord is upon many waters, and His glory thundereth." Since this NAME includes all that properly belongs to God, it is well for us to inquire what

is this awful duty which is laid down in this third law of the "Decalogue?" The thing expressly prohibited, as you know, is the taking of God's name in vain; and the duty commanded is, the paying of due honor and reverence to all things relating to God—all which are certainly included in the comprehensive expression "*Name.*"

To take God's name in vain is not merely to make mention of Him in a careless, rash and irreverent manner, but to name or speak of anything whatever, which properly belongs, relates, or pertains to Him, as a God of supreme authority and sovereignty, of infinite dignity and majesty, in a manner by which the thing spoken of would be dishonored or brought into unworthy notice, ridicule or light esteem.

There are three great or principal ways, as I conceive, in which we may become guilty before God, in taking His name in vain, and in which God is generally dishonored in the particulars of this law. We will take the liberty, then, of noticing the different kinds of CRIMINAL SWEARING, as the first in order. The act of swearing, or of taking an oath, is nothing less than appealing to the God of high heaven to bear His testimony to the truth or falsity of all the things set forth under the oath. The act implies a submission to the arbitration of Him who seeth in secret; and, like the lot, it is a direct appeal to Jehovah, for His adjustment of the matter wherein the oath is taken. It is also a prayer for His direction and interference to bring such matter to a fair, truthful and just issue or conclusion. Hence, to swear to what is false and unjust is to appeal directly to the Supreme Being, in the most solemn possible manner, to adjust the matter sworn to according to the intention of him who swears; *i. e.*, to bring it to an unjust and dishonorable issue. This at once seriously assails the purity, truth and honor of Him to whom "lying lips are an abomination," "who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity."

There are two or three kinds of *criminal swearing*, which we will notice. The first, and most heinous, is "PERJURY." This is solemnly swearing, in God's name, to what we are fully conscious is utterly false. If there be anything more heinous than another, of which man can possibly be guilty, it is this: to use God's name, which is God Himself, to establish a lie—to call upon God, by using His great and glorious name, to give His witness to the truth of that which both God and the oath-taker know positively to be false. What is this but to attempt to make God a liar in the sight of men and angels, and to attempt, in spite of His purity and impeccability, to drag Him down to the low and degrading level of a fallen and corrupted being. It by no means can mitigate, excuse or extenuate the dreadful sin of perjury, to mix up the *true* with the *false* under oath, when the sole intention of doing this is more effectually to make the false be taken for the true. To swear with the intent to lie, although *some* truth

may be told, is, beyond dispute, real perjury. Even to state upon oath what is really true, in such a manner as to have false impressions conveyed and the lie believed, is also, beyond dispute, perjury in the sight of God. To tell only a part of the truth, under oath, in order that an intended lie or false impression be conveyed, is only a mere trick in perjury, which by no means lessens, but enlarges its enormity. To equivocate, when candor is essential that the truth may be known, is to offer an almost unpardonable insult to the purity and boldness of truth, which deepens the dye of the crime. To so order speech upon oath as that the truth will become darkened, ambiguous and doubtful, and that the lie will be more apt to be received than the truth, is nothing less than to call upon God to become a partaker in the injustice and wrong effected by falsehood. All this is surely doing an almost unpardonable despite and dishonor to the terrible name of God. In fact, it is an attempt to make God Himself a tool in the cause of iniquity and to turn His mysterious name, which is a universal blessing, into a desolating curse.

The false swearer is not only guilty of dishonoring God by turning His name into a vanity and a curse. He dishonors God in that he subverts the ends of God's providences, and intrenches upon all His laws by becoming a public scourge and a sore in the very heart of society. The man who will not respect the name of his God will not respect the rights nor the welfare of his neighbor. If the perjurer be revengeful, he will not scruple to wield the sword of God's name to accomplish his awful purposes. By false swearing a man may, and often does become a murderer, a thief, a robber, a despoiler of other men, a destroyer of widows and orphans—in fact, a rock of danger and a curse to all around him. If he set his relentless heart upon murder, and if circumstances be propitious, he can swear away the life of one man, or many men, as the case may be, and plunge whole households into the thickest glooms of despair, disgrace and poverty. If he be avaricious, he can become rich by hiring himself out as the tool of the bloody-handed and black-hearted, and grow fat by perpetrating the darkest crimes against society with impunity. He will not scruple (and, alas, how rife is the crime amongst ourselves), urged on by sinister and malignant motives, to blast the reputation of him who becomes the object of his hate *by a false oath*. He will pitilessly rob the friendless and unsustained, without a single pang of remorse, *by a false oath*. By it he will separate husband and wife—sunder what God hath put together, either that his own passions may be satiated or those of his vile employer; he will take root in the ruins of others, and flourish from their destruction wrought out by himself—will become rich, and live with a merry heart, that he may “add drunkenness to thirst,” that he may have the burning wages of the consumer's hire. *By a false oath* he becomes a

bird of the worst omen—a worm, bred in corruption—a beast of prey in the midst of society, from whose attacks none can be safe. A slave to his own passions and an obedient hireling to those of other men, he works out this terrible amount of evil, as it were, by the hand and sanction of the most pure and jealous God. His crimes are all committed in that great Name. He it is alone among men who attempts to make heaven itself play into the hands of hell, and the Almighty to league Himself with the prince of torments. He is a PECULIAR, a SUPERIOR sinner—a deliberate promise-breaker. All other sinners array themselves openly and boldly, in the sight of men and angels, on the side of the arch fiend, and the eyes of society are at once upon them, and it guards itself. But the false-swearer appeals directly to God while committing his deeds of darkness, thus attempting to make God the justifier and accomplice of his crimes, which fact quiets the fears and blinds the eyes of men to the evil which he may be accomplishing. No wonder, then, that Jehovah's prohibition of this sin should stand out in the boldest relief among his other laws, as being the greatest dishonor that could be done Him. No wonder that He should throw up a wall of fire around that awful name, which can be made so powerful in evil, in the mouth of the fearless perjurer. No wonder that the prophets of old should go about the streets delivering warning after warning, to respect the name of Him who is as infinite in terror as he is in love. No wonder that these girded men of the wilderness should level denunciation after denunciation, like so many thunderbolts, at this fearful sin, which would drag the Ruler of heaven's legions and earth's inhabitants from His throne of purity and innocence to the very depths of eternal night, and which would dim—nay, extinguish forever the light and glory of heaven, by turning it into the darkness of hell.

There is another kind of criminal swearing which this commandment particularly forbids, to wit: all that is uncalled for and utterly needless. In common conversation there is no cause whatever for using the name of God, nor of anything which properly belongs to Him, because the subject matter of ordinary discourse is not so deeply solemn nor so highly important as that we can be justified in appealing to God in it by calling upon His name. An oath can only be justifiable in a matter of such gravity, importance and moment as that such matter cannot be adjusted or settled without it.

If the name of God be God Himself—which is agreed—then it is, beyond description, sinful and dangerous to use that name on every trivial and light occasion—to play with it or make light of it. To trifle with the Lord of all the universe is by no means a light matter; for it has often been visited with the most signal and fatal punishments. God, so far from suffering Himself to be mocked or made light of, declares positively that

He will neither be mocked Himself nor suffer the mocking of His servants to go unpunished. What, then, my brethren, are we to say of the horrid PROFANITY and dreadful BLASPHEMY which seems to burthen the very atmosphere we breathe? Are we merely to talk of it as a growing vulgarity of the community, or as an ungentlemanly indulgence, which a man may betray without flying in the very face of Heaven, trampling upon the honor of God, and outraging the feelings and ears of all good men in society? Are we to speak of it as the result of a careless choice of words, or as a half-innocent or harmless HABIT, which may be thrown off at any time, with a little attention or a few struggles? My tongue, I hope, will not cleave to the roof of my mouth; my respect for God, for my duty, and for the pulpit of the eternal Church, I hope, will never give way to the gratification of pandering to the feelings, prejudices and vanity of a corrupted people. This profanity, this shameless blasphemy which pervades society is no vulgarity, but the long, the loud-sounding war-cry of hell. It is no mere harmless indulgence; it is the sure proof of the low degradation into which this country is sunk; it is a voice, loud as the clamors of hell, telling the civilized world that California is all but unchristianized—that religion has lost its power and its prestige here, and that the powers of darkness have these shores for a possession. Where, I ask, can religion be in a profane community? Can the honor and glory of God, in any sense, be safe in the keeping of the blasphemer or profane? How does it happen that the servants of God themselves seem to sit easily and look coldly on, while the name of the great “*I am*” is in the mouth of every ribald bacchanalian and joined to all that can be degraded and obscene in language? Have ordinary words become so scarce that our thoughts, rage and passion cannot be expressed without calling upon God, by His Name, to witness all our trifles, our frenzy and violence? Has God fallen into such a deep sleep that he cannot be wakened by anything else but by howling out His name wherever we go? Has language become so distorted and void of meaning that it can no longer convey ideas unless the awful name of Jehovah God be called into continual requisition? Away with the velvet lip and silky tongue. The fastidious and gentlemanly rabbi would tell you that it is in the lower orders of society that this profanity exists, and that it is what is to be expected from them. But, having watched society carefully, I tell you, without fearing indignation, seeking favors or approbation—and I call my God and my conscience as witnesses over my soul and my tongue—that this sin, like an omnipresent and damned spirit, has permeated all grades of our society, rich and poor, high and low. Come with me to the midnight rendezvous of revel, where high-toned and obese gentility, haggard youth, and blasted age meet on the same level of depravity; there hear each foul sentiment, whether true or false, clinched

with a hideous imprecation; there hear the drunken shout terminate in the terrific oath; God's name and God's character howled forth in drunken wit or fury, as the humor or the passion of the miscreant may dictate. Come with me to the gambling-hell, to which we require no candle to light us; there behold the children of the misty night absorbed in **ONE** ruinous passion—victims to **ONE** tyrant lust; and, as the game is won or lost, hear the name of the Most High wantonly used in the prurient rejoicings of one and in the demoniacal ravings of another's despair. Walk, even, the streets of your cities, towns and villages; open your ears to men's language in your public thoroughfares, and you will hear the name of God almost upon every lip, with the most flippant and aggravating levity. Men who appear and profess to be gentlemen—who seem to be in the full possession of their reason—to know the right use of language—will accompany the most idle threat with the name of Jesus, and the most trifling and equivocal promise with the name of the Most High. Their wine must be thus seasoned or it loses its flavor; their most common conversation must be plentifully interlarded with blasphemy or it becomes dull and uninteresting. They have actually become such slaves to profanity that, when they thus offend, even in the presence of virtuous females and good men, they smile with mockery and contempt while asking for what they call pardon. It is deeply humiliating to be compelled to state that this sin has entirely overrun the State; and so completely has it taken possession of the people, that one hardly knows whether to give the palm to **GAMBLING** or to **SWEARING**. Wherever a person goes it is all one—the stage or the steamer, the hotel or the street, the kitchen, parlor or dinner-table, the shop or the saloon—every place of amusement—all, all resound with blasphemy—and that, too, of the most horrid kind. This is no exaggeration. Would to God that it were. Terrific execrations, powerful enough to move the very stones in our streets with astonishment, dreadful enough to cause the very walls of our cities to shriek out with fear, are uttered on every slight occasion. It positively seems that the gates of hell turned upon their hinges and suffered a legion of fiends to escape, who have now ceased their flight and are resting their wearied wings on our shores. The terrible plague they have brought along with them has proved frightfully contagious; it is fed and fostered by its very victims. Society at length has become blunted and insensible to the heinousness and horror of this sin. Even the pulpit itself seems to have become silent in its direct, pointed and withering denunciations against it—its energies concentrating themselves into a refined style of persuasion, which falls upon the blasphemous soul as harmless as a shower of mustard-seed. Intellectual refinement and smooth speech are not the great desiderata of the pulpit. They are, certainly, a portion of her offensive weapons; but they are

not all. The walls of Zion must tingle to the "master-strokes" of St. Paul, which covered the learned men of Athens with confusion. She must thunder anew the "woes" of the incarnate God, not only that the proud Scribe and Pharisee may be brought low, but that the heart-strings may be riven of those whose boast it is, that they are under no control and that their rebellions and revellings cannot be restrained by the love nor anger of an omnipotent God. The men who stand in the gates of the Church must again take the burning torch from the hand of the ancient prophet and wave it on high, uttering the denunciations of heaven, that the bold offender may be cut short in his presumptions, and that the imaginations of his heart may vanish before the blaze of Jehovah's wrath. Like the shepherd-boy of old, they must raise the right arm and smite the defier of the armies of the living God, that the great giant and the vaunting armies of Philistia may become a prey to the hosts of the Lord.

In one sense, this sin is more than perjury; for the oath-vender often calls aloud upon God to destroy his soul and hurl him into hell; and this, also, when he knows well that he is confirming the lie with these oaths. It is wholesale, habitual perjury—a kind of perjury which man cannot legislate against, and can only be reached by the Almighty's arm. It is more contagious than the most fatal plague, neither age nor youth being spared; more destructive to the morals of a nation than a divine scourge to the inhabitants of the earth. It stains its reputation, beggars its character, strangles religion outright, and shames decency and virtue into close retirement. It frightens the good away and invites the hopelessly ruined and criminal. It is the never-failing indication of a moral condition little short of that of Sodom. Indeed, it may fitly be compared to that dark, dismal volume of smoke which rose from the ruined cities of the plain, as it witnesses to the awful fact that we are a people almost forsaken and truly smitten.

But there is one more kind of criminal swearing which all are to watch against, since it is strictly prohibited in the law under consideration. This kind takes place, sometimes, in matters which are of sufficient moment and importance to render an oath justifiable. This kind may be called *rash* swearing. A rash oath, in any matter whatever, not only endangers the commission of perjury, from the fact of its being made in the heat of passion or other exciting cause, or with carelessness, but is also highly irreverent, as it makes use of God's name without a due appreciation of His glory or honor. We often hear men make hurried promises and confirm them with as hurried oaths. These are fair specimens of rash swearing. Now, although the persons making these promises have no intention of leaving them unfulfilled, yet, since they were not well weighed, or were made under the influence of some exciting cause, or with carelessness, it is

the next thing to perjury to confirm these promises with oaths, because all the chances are that promises thus made can never be made good.

Again, we often hear rash oaths taken in matters which would justify them, but taken without a due regard to the awful obligation of an oath. They are hastily and inconsiderately taken. It may be done without any design of inflicting an injustice; yet the tendency may be—nay, often is, to falsify the truth. Hence, if this be accomplished, there is, *IN EFFECT*, a real perjury committed, and it is only extenuated by the absence of criminal intention. But, notwithstanding this, the thing is deeply criminal, because the injustice inflicted, the false made true and the true false, are all the results or natural consequences of the rashness and carelessness here censured. In this way God is greatly dishonored. The man, also, who administers an oath in a matter of so little moment, or who administers it rashly and irreverently in a matter which does require it, is, in the first place, guilty of taking God's name in vain; and, should an *EFFECTUAL* perjury result, he is a partaker in the guilt and a party to all the heinous and injurious consequences that may follow the crime.

There is only another kind of criminal swearing which we will consider, and leave this branch of our subject. We are prohibited by this law from swearing in the name of any creature, animate, inanimate, rational, irrational, human or superhuman, visible or invisible, either in heaven or on earth. Yet this is often done. To swear by, or take an oath in the name of anything is nothing else than to pay thereto the worship of honor. It implies that the creature by which we swear is omniscient; because the oath sworn attributes to the thing in whose name the oath is taken the power to know the secrets of the heart and of discovering the truth or falsehood of our statements and our sincerity or insincerity in making them. It also implies the attribute of omnipotence—the power to punish perjury. It implies, also, that the thing sworn by has the right and power to judge all men, not only for perjury and falsehood but for all moral defalcation. Now, the ascription of these attributes to any thing or being, but God alone, is manifest blasphemy, unqualified idolatry, and a great dishonoring of God. By doing this we directly infringe upon the first three commandments of the first table. We break the first law in that we ascribe what is essential to Deity to what is no God—hence making more Gods than one. The second, in that we pay divine honor and worship to what is no God; hence we are guilty of image-worship or idolatry. The third, in that we take God's name in vain, by using, vainly and lightly, things that properly belong and immediately relate to God.

How careful, then, should we be to bridle our tongues, purify and order our words, that the NAME of God be not taken in vain or dishonored.

SERMON V.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.—(CONTINUED.)

TEXT—Exodus xx, 7: “*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.*”

Having considered the principal kinds of *criminal* swearing, as prohibited by this law, we proceed to say something about *lawful* oaths.

The taking of an oath presupposes a firm belief in the Supreme Being—it being nothing else than an appeal to God to bear witness to the truth or falsehood of what we say. It is also a solemn imprecation, or prayer, that God may visit us in vengeance if we should state what is false. Hence, an atheist is not allowed to give testimony under oath, because his disbelief in the Supreme Being destroys his obligation to tell the truth.

Dr. Paley says, “An oath, like all other religious ceremonies, generally consists of some bodily action and of a prescribed form of words.” Amongst the ancients, both these were expressive of the most solemn, religious and binding obligation to tell the truth, on whatever occasion the oath was taken. This shows us in what reverence and fear this obligation was held among the enlightened nations of antiquity. It also shows us that they attributed to some God, true or false, the right and power of supreme judgment over man and his affairs, as being the Vindicator of all truth and the Avenger of the oppressed and wronged.

In matters of great moment and importance, men are under great temptations to falsify testimony, from motives of personal safety, interest, or aggrandizement. They must, therefore, be made to feel that they are under an awful obligation to tell the truth, and that alone. The ends of truth and justice imply the necessity of oaths. But nothing can be an oath, properly so called, unless it is taken in the name of Him who is the source of all truth and justice, and unless it is accompanied with a firm belief in His existence as He has revealed Himself. It is a peculiarity noticed by all thinking men, that when an oath begins to be taken lightly or rashly,

and to lose its solemnity and reverence among men, infidelity, with all its consequent evils and curses, begins at once to destroy all human honor, integrity and prosperity. Many good men have therefore thought it better to dispense with oaths altogether, that the sin of perjury might be prevented. But although this doctrine is supported by formidable reasons and arguments, and is apparently inculcated in our Saviour's oft-repeated precept, "SWEAR NOT AT ALL," it would be subversive of the very things it pretends to accomplish, if carried out. The present state of the world is, in fact, one of obligation; and to invalidate or destroy any part or portion of this OBLIGATION which hangs over mankind, is to blunt man's sense of duty—of right and wrong. We know that every man, so far as in him lies, is obligated to carry out the ends of justice and truth. If not, he is neither responsible nor subject to any law. Now, the obligation of an oath is one of the most sacred and binding that man can take upon himself; and although perjury proper and the sin of taking oaths on unworthy occasions might be obviated by the complete disuse of such oath-takings, yet men would not thereby become more honest or truthful. So that, since between man and man there must be some guarantee for trust, belief and confidence, there can be none better or stronger than that which is implied in the obligation of a judicial oath. What is called lawful swearing, then, is better than no swearing at all; the former being a ground of mutual confidence, trust, or assurance, but the latter a mere theory, which would deprive men of this ground altogether, and would thus tend to subvert all law, government, order and society, even as perjury and infidelity would.

But God Himself hath taken oaths, and Jesus Christ, with His immediate successors in the ministry. God, as is recorded in the Old Testament and testified to in the New, on several occasions and in proper matters, swore, by Himself, to the truth of His promises. It was that they might superinduce in man, to whom they were made, a full and a perfect trust or confidence. In Matthew, xxvi. 63, 64, we read that "the High Priest arose and said unto Him (Jesus Christ), I adjure thee by the living God." Here was the administration of a proper oath by the proper functionary, in a judicial Court, and on a worthy occasion. "Jesus saith unto him, THOU HAST SAID." Here is the taking of the oath by our Saviour; for, if He did not *assent* to the oath, which is the same thing as taking it, or if He did not consider it as administered to Him, He most certainly would not have answered the interrogation put to Him as under oath, nor would this have been recorded as the answer of our Lord when He thus bore testimony to His divinity. Thus we see the Saviour giving testimony, as a sworn witness, to His Messiahship, having sworn by Himself, who is the living God, who was adjured both in question and answer, that He is the Christ, the

Son of God. The question carrying the administration of the oath was to the effect, "I adjure thee by the living God, art thou the Christ, the Son of God?" The answer, implying the acceptance of the oath, was to the effect—I adjure the living God to bear witness to what I say; I imprecate His vengeance if I should say what is false—"THOU HAST SAID;" *i. e.*, I AM the Christ, the Son of God.

St. Paul frequently uses language, or certain expressions, which, if not oaths, certainly include them. For instance, he says: "But, as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay:" *i. e.*, By God, who is true, I protest that "our word toward you was not yea and nay." In another place he cites the instance of God swearing to Abraham, to show the immutability of His counsels and the infallibility of His promises: "For, when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, HE SWORE BY HIMSELF, saying, surely blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee."

There are many other passages in the Epistles, and some in the Gospels, of like import. We must then understand the Saviour's words, "Swear not at all," as a prohibition against all useless and irreverent oath-taking, which dishonors God's name, and not as an utter repeal of the general law promulgated of old, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; Him shalt thou serve, and to Him shalt thou cleave, and SWEAR BY HIS NAME." The Saviour's words are a caution to us to practice this law properly.

We have no time or space here to give an explication of the various forms and kinds of oaths which have been, and are still in use among men, nor to settle which are justifiable, or the contrary. The general rule is, that an oath is lawful when the matter upon which it is taken is of sufficient gravity or importance to require it, and when it is given and taken upon such matter, in the NAME OF GOD, for no other ends but those of *Truth, Righteousness*, and Judgment. There are the oaths of *office*, of *promise*, of *allegiance or obedience*, and of *supremacy, &c.* All these are lawful or unlawful, according to the opinions of moralists. But what are called *judicial oaths*, from the necessity of the case, and on account of the demands of justice and civilized law, which is founded upon the Supreme, are deemed lawful by most men, and have been recognized as such, not only by God Himself, but also by the generality of mankind in all ages of the world.

We pass to notice the two remaining ways in which God's name may be taken in vain. The next in order, to swearing, will be *vowing*.

A vow is no less than a *religious oath*—a superior or extraordinary religious promise. It is a promise especially made to God, and never to man; for the vower's purpose is alone to glorify or serve God in some special way. In these respects it differs somewhat from an oath so called.

An oath, in the ordinary sense, binds one only to speak the truth, that it may be known and justice done. In this sense it is indeed a solemn promise to, or engagement with God, to do something which will ultimately redound to His glory, and yet it is a promise or ground of assurance to man that something is to be done which will immediately affect him. But a vow is a promise, or an engagement entered into with God alone, to do something of which none but God can take cognizance, and the fulfillment of which none have a right to expect but God alone. It is the most solemn and closest engagement we can enter into with God, since the promise to Him in it is confirmed by an oath, and since He is willing to receive it if we earnestly and sincerely make it. Vows were often, in the older dispensations, grounds of the most solemn and dignified covenants between God and man, and were then very common. But it has been argued that, as we have no direct or positive commandments in the new dispensation, or any plain precept either to enforce or encourage vows, we should not make them; for, though they be lawful, they are unnecessary. It is indeed strange that men will thus enter the lists with inspiration.

The nature of every covenant, I conceive, implies the necessity of promises. But, in a covenant between God and man, the promises made by man are so solemn and sacred that they are really vows in His sight, because they are made to Him. The Christian covenant, being the reality of all that went before, is the highest and most sublime of all; and the promises made by man in it are, in the highest sense, vows. As high as baptism is over circumcision, so high are our baptismal vows above those made in that rite. The Scriptures command, teach and preach baptism—so has the Church, from the first days; but solemn promises, or vows in an extensive sense, are essential to that sacrament; therefore the Scriptures and the Church command, teach and preach vows. Promises made by both parties, in such a covenant as the Christian, must be superlatively binding on each; and such promises are the greatest and most solemn vows. To show us that promises made by man to God, on entering into a covenant with Him, are thus considered, the punishment of the covenant-breaker is the same as that of the perjurer, which is typified to us in the “cutting of animals asunder”—a dreadful figure of the outpouring of God’s vengeance. In every covenant, from the first to the last, we see God in numberless and merciful providences; on the one hand, fulfilling what he vowed, in nourishing and sustaining the Church, and in gathering her true children, from day to day, into the womb of heaven; and, on the other hand, the Church, in her true children, discharging what she vowed to God, although beset by the world, the flesh and the devil. We are therefore to conclude that, even in the Christian dispensation, we have made the most solemn vows to God, inasmuch as we have received and

taken upon ourselves the SEAL and the SIGN of the covenant, in baptism, and thereby become the children of God, vowing to maintain that relation, to the best of our ability, until God comes to bring us to Himself.

Many of you have taken solemn vows upon yourselves in baptism ; and, doubtless, some now listening to me have renewed them in the solemn rite of confirmation. But, may not I now ask, have you not forgotten them and left them utterly unpaid? Your consciences will return the true answer. We have, time and again, renewed these vows in our hearts, by forming good resolutions to spend our lives as we had at first promised ; yet each renewed vow, each good resolution, was made only to be forgotten—only to bring dishonor upon God's holy name.

There is another way in which we take God's name in vain. We vow too often ; not of will or necessity, but out of mere caprice or passion. Some will not only break their lawful vows, but vow that which is sinful and unlawful to be done, thus promising, in God's name, to do what He forbids. By doing this, we must suppose that God will expect that to be done which He hates—that He will receive whatever is vowed, even though it be sin, and that His service may consist in disobedience, if it only be vowed. It says, simply, that a mere hurried vow can alter God's nature, His law, and the service He demands, and that the economy of His government is at the mercy of a hollow human promise confirmed by an oath. If this be not taking God's name in vain, it is impossible that it can be done.

Again, we offend the dignity of God's name by vowing to do that which would be better left undone, and which there is every probability that we will be either unwilling or unable of ourselves to fulfill. Now, to promise God to do something which justice, or the dictates of common prudence or caution would forbid, is to mock Him to the face. It would be saying that we are the best judges of what is suitable to be vowed. It throws aside the guidance and counsel of God altogether and abuses His gifts of reason and judgment. If anything at all should be left "undone until it could be done well," that very thing is a vow ; because the taking of it demands the coolest and fairest deliberation and the clearest and most determined purposes. A rash vow is generally made under some excitement, without due consideration or thought, and the thing vowed is generally as wicked, foolish or indiscreet as the vow itself. It may often be a thing which would at once be dishonorable to God, hurtful to ourselves, and prejudicial to our neighbor.

It will also be taking God's name in vain, if we solemnly promise to do something in the future, against the fulfillment of which a thousand circumstances must conspire. This is to profess, before God, that we have a clear insight into the future—that we are masters of our own time and

that of others—that we can overrule the unforeseen providences of God, and that we can mould or change His purposes to suit our own. In fact, it is saying that we are the judges and masters of our own destinies and creatures of our own wills, independent altogether of the overruling providences of God. It is removing God altogether from the earth, by opposing our determinations to His will in governing the affairs of the world. It supposes Him to be governed, rather than governing—necessitated to receive everything vowed, however inconsistent with His character and however doubtful and impossible it may ultimately prove of accomplishment. It supposes that we ourselves, independently of His sustaining power and grace, can maintain and carry out all our purposes, notwithstanding our blunders and weakness. It makes us as strong and as wise as God. In a word, it is trifling with the awful responsibilities and dignity of a vow, and striving to offend God by making good an unlawful and impossible vow.

We take God's name in vain by vowing frequently. A vow cannot bear repetition, much less frequent repetition, even if the matter of it be lawful. The oftener careless vows are repeated, the oftener do we mock God and the more effectually do we add sin unto sin, until the Judge of all the earth can no longer withhold His vengeance. Frequent vows, like habitual swearing, render us completely insensible to their obligations and cause us to use with extreme levity the name of the Being to whom we make them, if not to view them more in the light of jests than of stern realities. The vows of baptism themselves, if frequently repeated, would lose their force upon us, for it would be abusing a sacrament. The same may be said of the frequent use of all vows, for by them religion is cruelly scandalized, its obligations over us lost sight of, the Church laid open to the "boar of the forest," confidence in the promises of God and respect for His name completely destroyed, and, at length, men will vow and revow anything and everything, without thought, intention or purpose whatever. These are certainly the tendencies of rash, irreverent and frequent vows.

But vows are acceptable unto God, therefore lawful, even in the new dispensation, if they be rightly made; if made on solemn and worthy occasions; if the motives governing us at the time be honorable to God; if made in calmness and deliberation and in entire dependence upon God for the ability and the will to fulfill them. And if the things vowed be reasonable, lawful, and, as it were, under our own control and for God's especial glory, and conducive to our own salvation, then our vows will be acceptable unto God. Otherwise we will only be taking God's name in vain.

Prayer is another duty, in the performance of which we may take God's name in vain. Prayer is defined as follows: "An offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, by the

help of His Spirit, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies." This definition will answer for all kinds of lawful prayer—public and private, open and secret, family and social, stated and occasional, special and ordinary. It defines the simple duty in every form—its matter, its method, its expression, its intention and object. If the *matter* of our prayers be in any way unsuitable to the nature of the duty itself, or unlawful to be set before the mercy-seat of the Most High, then we will be taking God's name in vain; for it is in the name of Christ, who is God, that we make them. The *method* must be in keeping with the solemnity and dignity of the duty; the *expression* suitable to the desires. The *intention* must be worthy of the Being to whom they are addressed.

We are commanded by our Saviour, not only to "watch and pray," but also to "pray and to watch"—these being the two features of the same difficult and solemn duty, and the only way we have of pleading our cause with God. How many are its privileges! At one time in it, the soul can take up the golden harp of *adoration* and pour itself out in strains of praise for the goodness and mercies of Him who soothes the wounded and heals the broken-hearted. At another, the soul, in the depths of repentance, can prostrate itself in humble *confession* before the throne of heaven, where the tear and sigh are registered. At another, the longing spirit can boldly pierce the realms of eternal day, and plead, in the elevated and impassioned tone of *supplication*, in the ear of God, for the manifold blessings of joy and peace which were purchased by the mysterious blood of the Lamb. At another time, we can take up the songs of *thanksgiving*, and join with angels and just men made perfect. At one time, the soul can pay the most reasonable, most acceptable and most sublime service in prayer, by surrendering herself in vows of *self-dedication* and *self-sacrifice*. At another, she can call around herself the guardian legions of heaven, when she *deprecates* her Almighty Defender to guard her from impending and surrounding evils. At one, or at different times, the soul can do all this in prayer. Prayer, therefore, being such a solemn and awful duty, must not be tampered with or carelessly performed; because the *Triune* God is its object and the immortal spirit its burthen. God's name, in prayer, must not be taken in vain. The heart must be fixed while engaged therein, else we are sure to dishonor our Creator by that which is intended to please Him. Nothing must be petitioned for which would offend the wisdom and majesty of the King of Kings, or our prayers will be mockeries and our expectations a desolation. No vain repetitions, especially of God's name, may pollute this duty of duties, else that holy name is taken in vain. We must go to our prayers properly prepared, and with the subject of them duly weighed and considered, so that the soul, without any fear of mocking God, may take its way to a throne of mercy. All irreverent

thoughts must be stifled—familiar and unbecoming expressions never be breathed. The coldness of monotony must not clog the wheels of this spiritual vehicle. Studied eloquence, for vain effect ; fiery and extravagant sentiments, and the rashness of wild fanaticism, must all give place to the calm glow of the earnest, subdued and unostentatious breathings of the soul. The pride of opinion and the heat of prejudice must not mingle with devotions addressed to that Being whose affectingly benevolent character attracts the soul. If otherwise, then God's name is taken in vain.

This duty must be discharged in a warm, yet calm, pure and reasonable manner, recollecting that it is addressed to Him who fills up the infinite abyss of every perfection, and whose eye or ear can neither see nor hear what is unworthy of Himself. We must be guided in, and inspired to it by the Spirit of grace and supplication that softens and renews the heart, breaks down the will, and fills the bosom with holy desires and heavenly tendencies. That Spirit binds up the spirits of penitent men and whispers to them the sweet news of pardon. He is the Father and tender Nourisher of every consolation and every feeling of peace, and presents the soul, after long and ardent intercession before the Throne, without spot or wrinkle, purified, sanctified, and meet for the nameless felicities of heaven.

You may, then, have a *little* understanding how God's name may be taken in vain in VOWING and PRAYING. I will ask, in all seriousness, have we not often taken God's name in vain, inasmuch as we have, time and again, broken the *few* vows we have made to Him in baptism ? Have we not all dishonored God when our prayers have been unworthy of Him and of the character of a Christian ? Listen to the voice within, and tremble at the answer. The vows of the Church, and especially her prayers, are but of little account with us, although these prayers, for warm devotion, pure and elegant diction, have no match in the Christian world.

I have spoken already of that shameless profanity and habitual blasphemy by which men take the name of God in vain. I have alluded to the awful fact, that this Name is introduced into our most common-place conversations. You will then ask, what more can you say ? A little more ; and you must suffer me, for it is on God's behalf I will speak. It was asked, " Why do you always tell us of our faults ? " Strange question to put to a minister of God. But it may be answered by asking you, a professedly Christian people, a question equally as strange. Would you like, or do you expect to get to heaven, with your souls steeped in faults and loaded down with sins ? If you do, you must immediately set about discovering a new road thither, for the Church knows of none such ; and when you have discovered it, depend upon it you will be in *good company*. Then, and not till then, may you safely refuse to hear the rehearsal of your faults and go on your newly-discovered way rejoicing.

But in what other ways do we as Christians take God's name in vain? God's honor and name are inseparably connected with and concerned in His WORD, His CHURCH and INSTITUTED MINISTRY. It is by contemptuously treating all these in our neglect of them, that God's name is dishonored. God's word is handled ignorantly, and impudently, in all our *new*, and what we call *reasonable doctrines*. From the Spiritist, the favored one of electricity, to the most incoherent mystagogue; from the oscillating sceptic, to the open and declared infidel, have we an army of wiseacres, if not prophets, who assail God's word in the strength of their boasted *wisdom*. There is cultivated, amongst us, an unbridled habit of thought, which is utterly subversive of all religion. It is no strange thing, indeed, to hear men, who if the truth were known, have never spent one hour in careful and unprejudiced study of scripture, drive through it as if they wrote it, and mix it up with the strangest rhapsodies ever penned or uttered, as if they understood all about it. They thus strive to bring it into ridicule and contempt, and throw it, as it were, piece-meal to the very dogs. You cannot fail to know that the literary taste of our society, generally speaking, has become so dangerously morbid, that nothing will satisfy it but the truly *mysterious* and *marvellous*. Any thing savoring of true religion, of God, and eternity, though we profess to be a christian and thinking people, comes "*stillborn*" from the press. Every new fangled notion, if it be only unreasonable, irreligious, marvelous or mysterious, is sure to be honored with its apostles; and if need be, with its martyrs. The oracles of the living God, as a beneficial study, or as a rule of life, are unheeded while a licentious literature is deluging the State; not merely with a bewildering philosophy, but with the most abandoned infidelity itself. California may hide her face with shame, from infidel Germany, since in her infidelity there is neither method, learning, reason nor philosophy. The wildest speculations of hair-brained fanatics, or lovers of *singularity*; the most ridiculous and unfounded opinions of God and His religion are overwhelming the country. In short, God's word is treated by the majority, or at least by a very large minority of the people, as if it were an empty fable, invented to frighten silly women, or to enthrall the human race, for the especial benefit of a class of men called "*Priests*."

The CHURCH is also an object of contemptuous neglect, nay, frequently of open mockery. The Church was purchased by the blood of Him who thought it "no robbery to be equal to the Father," the Eternal God. Yet, although God's name is upon her, and the honor of the spouse is the honor of the "*One Husband*," she seems to be an object of universal neglect. The murmurs against her are by no means deep and secret, but loud and open. A small minority of those who enjoy the fruits of the enlightenment she has given to the world, scarcely enquire if she is in existence; and out

of this small minority, only a solitary few are seen at her altars and in attendance on her public services. Her walls are almost empty ; her altars almost desolate ; and her sacraments falling into disuse. Amid the noises of the tempest, in the hurried rush of the multitude, in this deafening cry for gold, her demands are drowned, her claims are forgotten, and her tears fall unpitied and unseen. She would tell that she is hungry ; but the time can not be afforded, *the will can not be cultivated*, even to cast into her lap the fragments of the sumptuous feast. She would expose her wounds and sores ; but the dogs only are left at the gate to soothe them. She would tell that she is poor, houseless and friendless ; that she is a woman travelling in the wilderness, shedding tears under the twice knotted scourge of outrage and neglect ; but none have time to listen. Every one has his wife to marry, his feast to prepare, his oxen to try, his plot to complete, his plan to mature, his money to make and his houses to build. Her sublime services are slighted. Her *especial day* is devoted to "smiting with the fist of wickedness," avarice and tyranny. Her God is blasphemed and dishonored. Her prayers and sacraments are cast aside, as but small consolations. Her name and honor can find no consideration. And that she would become obsolete, seems to be the general wish. How terrible are these things, if they be truths. How ineffably dreadful must that guilt be, which is involved in this wholesale way of dishonoring God ?

God's ministers are also objects of our neglect. Since they stand to God in a particular relation ; and since they exercise those functions which look especially to God's glory and honor, every thing done directly or indirectly against them, in an improper way, does dishonor to the name of their Master. Of all men they must cultivate the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove, even while struggling with that tribulation which is given them, as an heritage in life ; so that they may accomplish their Master's work. Amongst us, their labors are redoubled, and in the same ratio are their tribulations. Laboring here, hoping even against hope, in the great work of saving souls ; but few are the green spots in this desert waste, few the encouragements to hope in this howling wilderness. They are the fools of the country, because they are poor, although they are its greatest benefactors. Every other man receives the full hire, nay more than the full, from the jaded mountebank to the necessary artizan ; from the snirking ballad singer to the honest tradesman. All, all are cared for, or at least, can put themselves in a position to be cared for. But the ministers of God, with few exceptions, are left to the tender considerations and charities of an irreligious multitude ; many of whom think it the part of true freemen to gnash upon them, and scout at their functions. The ministry of Christ are spoken against ; their motives are impugned ; their intentions wilfully misconstrued ; their labors thankless in the world ; and

their trials pass unpitied. Do not we, my brethren, entail some share of all this evil upon God's peculiar heritage? If so, we must bear in mind, that in doing so, we greatly dishonor God through them.

To conclude. At one glance, you may perceive the positive duty in the command. It is to speak at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, with the greatest awe and reverence to and of God. To watch all that we do and say, with respect to all things which properly belong to Him; so that we may honor and glorify His great name. To befriend religion in word and deed; to watch over its reputation; and to cultivate a due respect and esteem for all its holy things—so that neither our tongues nor our hands may offend.

But there is a punishment spoken of in this law, which teaches that God will, by no means, suffer His name to be turned into vanity, nor His holy things to be profaned. And, that although for a time, men seem to escape, yet righteous judgment cannot be far away. Belshazzar may be drunk with wine, from the holy vessels of the sanctuary; but the hand writing will soon be on the wall, and Cyrus will soon be at the gate. The watchmen of the night are hearing the rumblings of advancing retribution, as with prophetic ear; as if God were once again on His dread way, to vindicate His law in a more awful manner than when He shook the rocks of Sinai and furrowed the sides of the eternal mount.

SERMON VI.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

TEXT—Exodus xx, 8–11: “*Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.*”

THIS is the last law of that table of the Decalogue which relates to our duties towards God. The law, with respect to the Sabbath, was by no means a new one at the promulgation of the Decalogue; for Adam knew

it and observed it. In the 2d chapter of Genesis, we are informed that when "the heavens and earth were finished, and all the host of them, on the seventh day God ended his work, which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day from all His works, which He had made; and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." He rested upon it, and blessed it; hence REST upon this day, would be a duty owing to Him, by his creatures. We may, therefore, safely conclude that the law, with respect to the Sabbath, was given immediately after the completion of creation.

To the question, "What is the Sabbath?" there is a sufficient answer in the commandment itself. It is a day consecrated to religious rest, after being engaged during six, in all the ordinary duties of life. "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all that thou hast to do: but the *seventh* is the SABBATH of the Lord thy God." The reason, or ground of its institution is also given in the command: that it might be a day of commemoration, not only that God created "the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day;" but also, that his creatures might have an opportunity to rest from their labors, and to address especial praises to the Creator, for all those stupendous works, which engaged him during six days.

But, although this law was binding upon the antediluvians and upon the Jews, in consequence of its being expressly delivered to them—can it be binding upon Christians? There is not much harm in asserting, although we are by no means certain that the Jewish Sabbath was, most probably, the same day as that which was hallowed by the original command. But without stopping to agitate this question, which is beyond man's power to settle, we, with more profit, may enquire into the reasons why God should renew a law to the Jews, that had been given to all men from the very beginning.

It is beyond dispute, that Adam, and the patriarchs who sprang from his loins, knew that it was God's will that they should worship the true and living God, according to an express law, similar to the one respecting worship, promulgated in the Decalogue. Notwithstanding this, we find this original law renewed again in one of the negative commandments of the first Table; but so promulgated, as to be suitable, not only to the Jewish but also to the Christian dispensation.

Immediately after the flood, we find recorded a law against MURDER, which is again repeated to the children of Israel, on their deliverance from Egyptian slavery. Indeed, the whole of what we call the "moral law," in its full sense, though not in its present form, was known to man from the beginning; until universal idolatry effaced it from his memory. Adam, after the fall, is said by learned critics, not only to have known the will of his Creator, with respect to the Sabbath, but also, to have had six distinct

precepts given him, as a rule of life, which, in their full scope embrace the Decalogue. These were: 1st, Against idolatry. 2d, Against blasphemy. 3d, Against murder. 4th, Against adultery. 5th, Against stealing. 6th, To appoint judges to enforce these precepts. Noah is said to have had all these renewed to him, immediately after the flood, with the addition of one against eating the flesh of an animal before it was dead. The precepts enjoined upon Noah, are by Jewish Rabbins, said to be as follows, viz :—1st, Judgment : or to punish crimes prohibited. 2d, Blessings : the institution of the Sabbath, and praising the name of God, which is God Himself. 3d, Against idolatry. 4th, Against uncovering our own nakedness. 5th, Against the shedding of man's blood in murder. 6th, Against theft in all its modifications. And 7th, Against eating the flesh of an animal before it was dead.

The reason why the law of God was reiterated to Adam, to Noah, and to Moses, was certainly involved in the moral condition of man at the different times of its promulgation.

God gave it to Adam because he fell, and that he might teach it to his posterity. It was renewed again to Noah, that he might teach it to his descendants, to guard them from the gross idolatry and pollutions which caused the antediluvian world to be overwhelmed by the deluge. In both these cases, you will observe that the obligation of the law was universal ; because, as yet, there was no such peculiar and distinct people as the Jews. It was renewed again to this nation by Moses. 1st, Because they themselves had the law effaced from their remembrance, during their long captivity in Egypt. And 2d, Because this nation was chosen of God to enlighten all others as to their duties to God and man. Antinomians, then, might as well say, that, since the law was first given to Adam, and then to Noah, it was binding *only* upon ADAM and NOAH, until it was delivered to Moses ; as that, since it was first given to the Jews, in its present form, it is binding upon them alone, and not upon Christians. This conclusion, as all may see, would be a gross absurdity.

But with regard to the commandment under consideration. It was renewed to the Jews, not only for their own observance, but for that of all men. As soon as men multiplied, after the creation, as the Scriptures inform us, idolatry covered the face of the earth, and the wickedness of man caused a universal neglect, not only of the true worship ; but also blotted out from the memory of man, all traces of the day upon which God rested from his labors, and which he blessed. After the flood, although this day might be partially observed, in the family of Abraham ; yet when his descendants came under the Egyptian tyranny, for so long a time, they too, most likely, had forgotten all about it, as did the antediluvians of old. We have no mention made of their observance of it, during their bondage

in Egypt; nor have we any reason whatever to suppose that it was even remembered by them. Hence we may conclude, that there was good reason for God to promulgate anew to the Israelites, this, as well as other commandments, which were partially, if not wholly lost to them, in their state of captivity. It was thus renewed to the Jews soon after their passage of the Red sea, when their Almighty deliverer began to feed them with manna. We read, Exodus xvi, 5: "And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day, they shall prepare that (manna) which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." We have here an express command, that they should gather manna, on six days, every morning; but, that on the sixth day, they were to gather and prepare so much of it as would be sufficient for two days, viz.: the sixth and seventh. The seventh being the Sabbath, there was no manna to fall, nor was any to be gathered on that day. Hence we read, "that on the sixth day, they gathered twice as much bread—two omers for one man—and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them: This is that which the Lord hath said. To-morrow is the *rest of the Holy Sabbath* unto the Lord." This particular day of rest, then, the Jews were henceforth to observe as their Sabbath; which was the last day of the week, answering to our Saturday. It was appointed to the Jews, for a continual commemoration to them of their deliverance from the house of bondage; that it might be to their children a continually recurring proof that the God of Israel overcame on that day the great taskmaster of their fathers, in the Red sea; and that He sustained them miraculously, on manna, the food of angels, in the desolate wilderness. Therefore, the Lord spake unto Moses, saying:—"Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying: verily my Sabbath ye shall keep, for it is a sign between me and you, throughout your generations; That ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it, shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among the people." They were to sanctify it to a holy and religious rest; as commemorative of their deliverance from slavery, wherein they never experienced the rest of the blessed Sabbath; that they might have a weekly opportunity to address their praises and worship to Him who created the universe and delivered them from the power of their enemies, with His Almighty arm. The Jews were thus under two particular obligations to observe this day of rest; the defiling of which, in their case, was punished with death. 1st, Because God rested on the seventh, after laboring six, in creating all things visible and invisible. 2d, Because it was on this exact day of the Jewish week, that God accomplished their deliverance from slavery. This law then, to the Jews, not only comprehended the

SABBATICAL PROPORTION, which the original precept legislated ; but also the EXACT DAY upon which happened all the other particulars, for which the Jewish Sabbath was instituted.

The Jews were so sensible of their obligations to observe the SABBATICAL PROPORTION as sanctified unto the Lord, that they cut up their times into so many sabbatical sections, to be dedicated to holy purposes. As their seventh day was their weekly Sabbath, so was their seventh month a sabbatical month, or month of Sabbaths. This month was begun with the blowing of trumpets. Although it was the first month, and its first day the first day of the civil year ; yet, being the seventh month of the religious year, it was set apart as a month of sabbatical rest. The seventh year was also a sabbatical year ; in which the land was to rest from tillage. And at, or after the seventh of these sabbatical years, *i. e.* once in fifty years, there was a year of jubilee, wherein all were released from bondage and servitude.

The questions now come up : Is the Christian obligated by the law under consideration, to observe the sabbatical proportion ? and if so, does the law permit him to change the Jewish day to any other day, on which transpired certain events, which especially concern him as a Christian—the sabbatical proportion being always observed ?

The anti-sabbatarian maintains that the Christian is neither obliged to observe the sabbatical proportion, nor any day set apart BY MAN, for the commemoration of an event that transpired to overthrow all Jewish institutions. He argues, that, if the law, with respect to the Sabbath, be a part of the moral law, it certainly requires the same circumstantial exactitude of obedience as the other parts : therefore, that if we are bound by this law at all, it certainly calls upon us to observe the Jewish day, which is our Saturday.

We will admit, nay, we strongly affirm that this law *is* a due part and parcel of the moral law ; but with the qualification that it is partly moral, and partly positive. The positive portion of it may be altered, yet the moral ends and purposes thereof need not be, by such alteration, invalidated or destroyed. The moral portion will remain the same as ever. When we hear St. Paul stating, in the same breath, that Christians are not obliged to observe Jewish days and Sabbaths, but, that they are subject to THE WHOLE MORAL LAW, of which the one respecting the Sabbath is a part, we will be at a great loss to understand him, if we receive the anti-sabbatarian's views. If his words have any meaning at all, it can be nothing else than this : that the Christian is not obliged to observe the JEWISH SABBATH ; but *is* bound to observe SOME SABBATH, that the moral ends and purposes of the law may be answered. The Jew answered these, by observing his Sabbath, while his dispensation was not as yet passed away.

The Christian fulfills them when he observes his day ; from the fact that the command only legislates the PROPORTION, and the MANNER of its observance—and not ANY ONE particular day.

God who framed the commandment, is too wise to make a law for the observance of one particular day, by all mankind ; because, His own works would render obedience to such law, utterly impossible. If the command should strictly hold ALL mankind to one particular day, of necessity, one portion could never obey its injunctions at all—for, while it is morning and evening on one part of the earth, it is evening and morning on the other. While some nations would be singing their hymns of praise, and offering up their prayers, others would be asleep during the watches of the silent night. Hence, ere the day could be universally kept, beginning and ending at the same hours, some portion of mankind must deprive themselves of their natural rest, which the law does not require, and which, in its wisdom it would never permit ; or one portion would be desecrating it while the other would be observing it. The law, as you will observe, puts forward its injunctions in very general terms ; so much so, indeed, that it avoids the difficulties which are involved in the different CYCLES. There is no notice whatever of the day from which the *septenary* cycle is to be computed. It seems to have left this to the discretion of mankind ; because no such computation could be made with exactitude, owing to the endless difference of latitude and longitude ; and also, because there has never been sure certainty in the computation of the *HEBDOMADAL CYCLE*. Some nations count their days from midnight to midnight ; others from morning to morning ; yet, in the law, there is no rule expressed or implied which fixes when the day should begin, or when end. If the exact observance of the particular seventh day were necessary to its proper fulfillment, either the law itself, or the prophets, or other scriptures would most certainly have guided man in his computation of the septenary and hebdomadal cycles. There is no rule supplied ; and among different nations this computation is diversely made, so that now, as well as always, man is not certain as to the first or last day of the original septenary cycle. Hence we may conclude, with the utmost safety, that the positive portion of this law allows man to adopt his own most convenient computation ; but that the moral portion, according to the intention of the original institution, binds him to observe a seventh portion of his time, a seventh day of rest after six of labor, A *SABBATH*, as holy unto the Lord.

It is not necessary to prove that this commandment is a due part of the moral law, which has perpetuity and universality of obligation and authority, and that its intention is much higher than that of a mere precept of political expediency. It has an unrepealed position among the other laws of the Decalogue, all of which our Lord and His Apostles obeyed and ac-

knowledge. Our Saviour came to fulfill the law, and the Apostles went about to establish it. But what law? Certainly the moral law, which slept in the mind of God from all eternity, and which was delivered to man from time to time, as it seemed fit to the Almighty. The laws of the Jews are divided into the moral, the ceremonial and the prophetic. But we do not find the law with respect to the Sabbath included in the ceremonial, hence we must refer it either to the moral law or the prophets. It *is* included in the moral; and the prophets taught it because it was so included, for their moral precepts were nothing but reiterations of that Faith and Obedience which are the teachings of the Decalogue. Our Lord came to fulfill the law and the prophets; and He delivered two new commandments, upon which they hang, and which give them universality of obligation and authority. By giving His authority, then, to the moral law, both by teaching it and recognizing it in obedience, He certainly fulfilled it, in the strictest sense of the word. He fulfilled the prophets by obeying their moral precepts and enforcing their obligation, and also by verifying their predictions in His person, character and mission. He fulfilled what is called the ceremonial by accomplishing all that its typical ceremonies foreshadowed, in becoming a sacrifice for man and the Saviour of mankind. Hence the ceremonial ceased to be obligatory upon any, because it was realized; but the moral law and the moral precepts of the prophets are still perpetuated in their universal obligation, by being established by the Lord's sanction and the teachings of His Apostles.

But the anti-Sabbatarian maintains that the obligation of the Sabbath is not binding upon Christians, since there is no expressed precept to that effect in the New Testament. It would be far more consistent with true logic and common sense to say that, since there is no express *repeal* of the law with respect to the Sabbath in the New Testament, its obligations become universal and perpetual. Our Lord Himself says, expressly, that "THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN;" not merely for the JEW MAN, but for the GENTILE also; *i. e.*, for all men. From this declaration we may infer the universality of the Sabbatical obligation. And since He observed it, not as conforming to the ceremonial law of the Jews, but as a moral law, comprehended in the sum total of our duties to God and man, we may also infer that its obligation is established perpetually and universally; that it still stands as an unrepealed law in the Decalogue.

What St. Paul said to the Romans as Christians, he also says to us as such; which is, that Christianity does not destroy or make void the law, but, on the contrary, establishes it. But, what law? Surely not the ceremonial, because it was merely a temporary arrangement, which throughout was intended to be abolished when the reality of its figures and types was come. It must, then, be the moral law, which existed from all eter-

nity and will continue forever. This law could neither be abolished nor mutilated by Christianity, though it might be established or fulfilled by the teachings and sanction of the Author and Finisher of salvation. It is the expressed will of God, which is unchangeable; it therefore cannot conflict with Christianity. Christianity can never make void the will of God, as it stands opposed to evil, but strengthens and establishes it. The law, then, is a part of Christianity itself, since OBEEDIENCE to it is the fruit and evidence of that FAITH which the Apostle inculcates on the Romans, as the first and great duty of the Christian.

If, then, the law with respect to the Sabbath stood embodied in the moral law, from the beginning, as a due part of it, the New Testament is the last place wherein we should look for its repeal. Christianity would be making itself void, if it could abolish the whole or mutilate any part of the Decalogue. The Sabbatical obligation is as strong and universal as ever, and neither Jew, nor Gentile, bond nor free, is or can be exempt. The extent of the obligation goes no farther, as I have already attempted to show, than to bind us to observe the SABBATICAL PROPORTION of our time, as holy unto the Lord. The object of the institution is to procure and perpetuate public worship, which, without doubt, other portions of the Decalogue demand. Without some Sabbath, there could be no public worship or public teaching—there would be no solemn assemblies, or holy convocations. All these are the moral ends and purposes of this law; and to slight them is as much at one's peril as to slight any other part of the moral law. To deprive God of His public worship, or to absent oneself from the solemn assembly, is as much a dereliction of duty, as to steal or commit adultery. For what reason is a man prohibited from doing any secular work upon the Sabbath; but, that he may have an opportunity to join in public worship, which is one of the greatest moral ends of the law? Thus then, we see, that although this law enjoins only upon us the "PROPORTION;" yet it prohibits every individual from making or appointing a Sabbath of his own; because, whole societies, communities and nations must observe the same day, ere the moral ends of the law could be fulfilled.

I have stated already, the two reasons which obliged the Jews to observe a Sabbath. We now pass to consider the case of the Christian. The Jews worshipped God as the Almighty, as the Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. In this particular respect we, as Christians, must also worship God; since we stand in the same relation to Him, as did the Jews. This, then, is one reason or obligation, why we, as Christians, should observe the seventh part of our time, a seventh day of rest, as holy unto the Lord. The Jews worshipped God, as their deliverer from Egyptian slavery; and as their sustainer in the wilderness, with the food

of angels. We, as Christians, do not worship Him as our deliverer from any temporal or earthly slavery ; but from that of sin and Satan. The Jewish Sabbath therefore could not answer the Christian in all respects. It would certainly be commemorative of the work of creation ; yet not of any special deliverance of the Christian. The Jews sanctified that very day unto the Lord, upon which their deliverance was completed, by the passage of the Red sea, which was the last day of the week. But the Christian, having nothing to do with the grounds of Jewish institutions, could not observe this day with propriety ; since he could sanctify another day unto the Lord, upon which not only the creation might be commemorated, but also the complete redemption of all mankind—the day the Sun of Righteousness rose with healing under his wings—on which the Son of God burst his blood-stained tomb, and our Saviour and Deliverer overcame all our enemies. The particular deliverance of the Jews, being only a shadow or type of this universal deliverance, of course the day that commemorated the shadow would be superceded by that which was to commemorate the reality ; the Sabbath, being but a type of SUNDAY, or more properly the “*LORD’S DAY*.” The last day of the week gave way to the first ; because heaven, earth and hell then stood still as it were, to gaze with awe and astonishment upon the Conqueror with red apparel, returning from His strife with unseen principalities and powers, to proclaim a victory which will be the song of eternity. Who dares then to pronounce the change a useless innovation ? Who dares make light with the obligation to observe this day of days as a weekly Easter ; as a day of prayer, praise and thanksgiving unto the Almighty Conqueror ? The Apostles were expressly authorized to found the Christian Church ; to appoint its days and dictate its worship and doctrines. They would not have abolished the Jewish Sabbath, and instituted the Christian, unless they knew it was their Lord’s will that they should do so. Most probably the Saviour gave them express instructions in the matter ; at all events they were guided in it by the unerring Spirit of truth, as well as in all else they did in relation to the worship and doctrines of the church. They would not, they could not make the change, unless they had the most undoubted and unequivocal authority. It is sufficient for us that the Apostles instituted and observed it themselves, and that the church has in all time considered its observance obligatory upon herself and upon all men. It is dangerous, therefore, to wink at the apostolic precept : “*forget not the assembling of yourselves together*.”

And now, my brethren, if the obligation of that which was the shadow of the Lord’s glorious day, was so great, as that the infringement thereof was punished with death among the Jews, how much greater must be our obligation to observe our Sunday, when the grounds of its institution are

so much higher. How much more strict and binding upon us to keep holy this day which was appointed by the companions of our Lord, if not by our Lord Himself, to celebrate a victory and deliverance spiritual and universal. How careful should we be to keep it holy, knowing that it is the Lord's day; and how anxious should we be to know our duties on that day, that we may fulfill its holy ends and purposes.

We are commanded, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, to sanctify this day by an entire cessation from all secular labor, and to consecrate it as a day of rest to religious exercises. We are regularly to attend public worship; to join in the prayers and praises of the Church; these being the great and holy ends of the sabbatical institution. Nothing can excuse us from staying away from church, but circumstances over which we have no control. We are not to attend church, or come into the holy convocation, for the same purposes, that, I am afraid, many of us do; but to hear God's word read and expounded, and join earnestly and fervently in the public services of the church. We know that some come, not from a sense of duty, or for the sake of example, but merely because it is fashionable. They come in the morning when fine dresses can be seen to advantage; but in the evening they stay at home to spend the holy hours of the Sabbath in idleness and listlessness. Some attend church from a fear of being considered irreligious; thus making the church and religion so many wires in their worldly policy of expediency. Others again, come with designs upon their neighbors, and even on the preacher; to gain capital for gossip and tale bearing—to have something to find fault with, or at all events, to criticize. All who do this, certainly do *not* sanctify the Christian Sabbath.

In order to meet the moral ends of this day, the Christian must on every Communion Sunday partake of the holy sacrament. If he do not this, he not only desecrates the Lord's day, but also despises another moral precept delivered by our Saviour immediately before his death; and tempts and grieves his Holy Spirit, by turning coldly away from His proffered mercy. Such defile the Lord's day, by an act at once foolish and dangerous; which proclaims to the world that we have no part in Him who bought us with His blood. It is also necessary, in order to keep this day holy, that we should engage ourselves in searching our hearts, to see if they are more attached to the will of God than they were on the preceding Sunday. We are to take a true and just account of the sins we have committed during the week; and then pour out our souls in confession and repentance of them in secret prayer. We are also to call to our remembrance the many mercies we have received during the week, and during our lives; and then render to the kind Giver of every good and perfect gift, humble and hearty thanks for them all. We must give ourselves, on this day, to holy meditations; to reading the oracles of the living God, and strive to extract

from them that knowledge which will make us wise unto salvation. We are to abstain from all works, except those of charity and necessity. Works of charity were performed, on this day, by our Saviour Himself; and since we have such an example, we must, if need be, seek out objects of charity around us, and do all that we reasonably can to alleviate their sufferings, relieve their necessities, and administer comfort to them in their sorrows and afflictions. We must abstain altogether from works of a secular nature, such as engage us during the week, and employ our ordinary time—selling and buying, bargaining about goods, and calculating gains and losses, and all that would not be in keeping with the holy and solemn purposes of the Lord's day. We are also to avoid all silly amusements and sinful entertainments, however popular, fashionable, or polished; because polished ungodliness is the most fascinating and dangerous. This day must be spent alone in that for which it was designed—**TO THE SERVICE OF GOD.**

This is not all. We are commanded to see that all in our houses, and within our jurisdiction, man and beast, the stranger that sojourns with us, abstain from labor on this day, as we do ourselves. It is our duty, therefore, to bring our children, our servants, and all over whom we have control or influence, to church on Sunday. Some think that this is going somewhat too fast. It is no faster than the law itself; because it requires not only ourselves to obey its injunctions, but to do all in our power to use all just and reasonable means to make others do the same. Here then, is a brief outline of our duty with respect to the Lord's day; to which the following sublime promises are made. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free; and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Thou shalt then call, and the Lord shall answer: thou shalt cry, and He shall say, here I am."

But the penalty of defiling the Lord's day, this holy and solemn fast, is as terrible as the promises are glorious and sublime. See a type of it in the punishment which was inflicted on the defiler of the Jewish Sabbath. To which are we, not as individuals, but as a people, entitled:—to the promises or to the penalties? You yourselves will be the judges. A public censor is often deservedly branded with shame. The man who ceases not to fasten upon public follies and vices, for the mere purpose or pleasure of becoming a public censor, has no disposition to counteract these vices

and follies—he neither seeks the truth, nor does he want to speak it, that its ends may be accomplished. His object is only to make a noise—he is a man of bad faith. Therefore, his censures often brand himself with shame. The public cynic is to be scorned. Let the public itself be the censors of its own vices; and the cure will the more speedily come. Be ye then your own judges in the matter before us.

HAVE WE, as a people, a Sabbath, a seventh day of REST after six of labor, or no? Do we sanctify one day in seven to our Creator and Redeemer, to commemorate at once the stupendous works of creation and redemption? What is the answer. Let us hide our faces with shame, for the truth is, that as a general thing we have NONE. Throughout the seven, it is one unremitted scene of labor—one continued smiting with the fist of wickedness; one monotonous pursuit of riches amid the strife of business, and of man and beast struggling under the "*yoke of hire*," relieved indeed at intervals only by frivolous amusements and flagitious festivities. As this festival of festivals is ushered in upon the ceaseless tide of time, it is greeted with astounding oaths, dreadful blasphemies; with the drunkard's song and the howl of the wearied midnight reveller. The ordinary business of life is not suspended, although the loud denunciations of Almighty God are uttered against its transaction. Even those who claim to be friendly to its observance, will not hesitate to offer the most empty excuses for their desecration of this day. They think that the necessities of competition in business are a sufficient excuse. Cannot the ground of this heartless excuse be traced to the blindness of the public mind to the sabbatical obligation? Because one man opens his shop upon Sunday, does this necessarily compel and excuse his neighbor to do the same? Has the loss of a few dollars of a Sunday more terrors for them than the anger of God? Does the possession of a few coins, less or more, weigh heavier with them than a well pleased God and an approving conscience? It indeed would be a serious temptation to a man, if he could gain the WHOLE WORLD at the expense of his own soul, but it is beyond description strange to see a man jeopardizing salvation for the sake of the miserable profits of a Sunday's business. Why was it instituted at all? why are the doors of the church thrown open? Is it not to call man to the remembrance that he is a creature, and that, too, a redeemed creature; to make him forget the things of this world, and to look forward to the hour when death and judgment must overtake him? that the inhabitants of the earth may have a day of rest, a day of holy convocation, a day wherein to exercise mercy to man and beast?

But why are our churches deserted? Does our neglect, as a people, to meet in the sanctuary, come up to the carefully worded CAUTION in the law, "REMEMBER to keep the Sabbath day holy?" Are our idle excuses for non-attendance truthful and worthy? Put it to your consciences with-

out delay. Look tremblingly at the word "REMEMBER," and then look, without vanity or pride, upon your cities, towns, and villages. Mark the groups of irreligious and besotted idlers who crowd your saloons, while the church bell is tolling loudly the sacred hour of public worship. Listen to their degraded conversation, shouted forth in shameless ribaldry. Hear the confused ring of bottles and glasses, the rolling of billiards, and see the gaming table bestrewed with cards as if this day were a day of special license. Harken to the sickening din of business and to the bewildering whirl of amusement, as if this day were set apart to forget that there is a God, a Creator and Redeemer. The very beasts of burden, wretched only in being made subject to man, seem, with a painful instinct, to dread this holy day, for their jaded limbs, which ache for rest, cannot be suffered to enjoy any on account of our business and amusements. This day brings no rest to our man-servants, our maid-servants, nor our cattle. Our greed for money, our selfishness, our love of vain amusement, not only urge ourselves into the heated pursuits of ordinary life, and into the most unseemly frivolities on the Lord's day, but all around us, under our control or influence, both man and beast, must labor on this day, either to feed our avarice or satisfy our passions—thus adding one day more to the number of days in which the weary toils of life may lawfully be undergone. The theaters are thrown open, the drama procures its multitude of gazers, while the message of peace can only be delivered to the few. Men and women whose object it should be to correct the moral tone of society, flock into this house of pleasure on the Lord's day, when they should be in the sanctuary on their bended knees, confessing their sins and imploring pardon. The profane song is listened to with rapture by hundreds, while the holy hymn of praise and thanksgiving is faintly sung by a few voices. Even the turmoil of business and the ceaseless stir of our diversified amusements disturb the public devotions of the small assembly of worshippers. "King Richard" is strutting the mock stage of life in tinsel and mock majesty, before a numerous and enraptured audience, while the sounds from Calvary reach the ears of but few. A proficient in high or low comedy ministers to the people on this day, when the priests of God should be ministering to a dense and holy convocation. On this day, the avaricious merchant and the grog seller finger their gold, while the coffers of the church are scarcely replenished by the widow's mite. The sounds of busy trade are heard in the open mart, while the elevated tones of the pulpit rebound in hollow echoes from deserted walls. It is indeed a mournful fact, that the Lord's day is turned into a day of labor, of amusement and of misery to man and beast. Sunday desecration has become a national sin, and suffer me to tell you that there is no other sin so strongly indicative that religion has lost its hold upon our minds, and that we are fast hurrying to the tomb

amid the wrecks of the sacred things and institutions for which martyrs bled and which our fathers revered.

Has it ever struck you that the blessed rest of the Sabbath is emblematic of the eternal rest which awaits the people of God? He, then, who cannot rest from labor one day out of seven, to hold communion with his God, cannot hope for rest in eternity. He who cannot find pleasure in meeting his God in the sanctuary one day out of seven, will not find it in being with Him throughout eternity. Oh, my brethren, the very name of the Sabbath is peace—its holy hours speak of joy, mercy and repose. In many lands, this day brings peace to the friendless and homeless, rest to the weary children of labor, and relief to the companions of sorrow. Even the generous beasts of burden seem to know its stated return. Like the balmy hours of sleep, it cuts up the troubled life of man into welcome intervals of rest. Its calm and holy hours bring along with them, to this lower world, the tranquillity of heaven itself, and as they fleet silently away we feel as if we were present with angels and spirits who rent the heavens and came down to bear us company in its holy work. Soft, soothing, cheering, are its blessed influences upon the soul.

Let us, therefore, my brethren who profess to be Christians, watch over this day and keep it as we would our souls. Overthrow this little understood, and as little valued institution, and the salvation of man is in eminent peril. The worship of God will be forgotten, darkness will overtake the nations, and man will again become a savage for want of Christian instruction. But observe it as it should be, and a thousand evils which already afflict society will soon be obviated. Observe it 1st, "As a day of rest. 2. As a day of remembrance of creation, preservation and redemption. 3. As a day of meditation and prayer, in which to cultivate communion with our God. 4. As a day of joy, in which we commemorate the defeat of hell and the grave. 5. As a day of public worship whereon the church celebrates her marriage. 6. As a day of praise, and faith, and hope, whereon the Apostles' tears ceased to flow on beholding their risen Lord. 7. As a day of full anticipation, on which we can look forward to that eternal and blissful Sabbath that remaineth for the people of God."

SERMON VII.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

TEXT—Exodus xx, 12 : “*Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*”

WE have now reached the “Second Table.”

Whether a thing be right because God wills it, or whether God wills it because it is right, is a question which can only have a charm for speculative Christians. It is sufficient for us to know that He wills us, both to fulfill duties to Himself and to our neighbor, hence we may be assured that it is right to do so. The man who sits at Jesus’ feet, and runs to do His will, troubles not himself about such matters.

Every intelligent being knows that he stands in certain relations to his God, and that these very relations entail upon him certain duties which God’s law requires to be fulfilled. He is also notified of the fact, in reason as well as revelation, that he is essentially a social being, certain duties being due by him to his neighbor, and by his neighbor to him. Man was intended for society, inasmuch as he was commanded from the beginning “to multiply and replenish.” We see God’s rational creatures, both men and angels, existing in “collective bodies.” We may conclude that the social system was an original intention of creation. Relative duties, then, from the nature of the case, must necessarily arise. We find them discharged by the righteous and forgotten by the wicked from the creation itself, so that the law respecting them must have been known to man from the very beginning, else righteousness or wickedness, obedience or disobedience, could not have existed until such law was delivered to Moses.

The particular laws of the Decalogue respecting our duties to God, certainly presuppose some general law with respect to the same, to have existed from creation. Those we owe our neighbor, also presuppose another general law known to man from the beginning. These two general laws are only particularized in the law and the prophets. If this be so, then what we call the moral law must have been the will of God from all eternity ; it must have existed in the divine mind, deep in the abyss of the

eternal substance. It came to dwell with the sons of men "in the likeness of God's offspring;" to reveal the truth, the wisdom and goodness of the eternal Father. We must believe, therefore, that God made man essentially a social being, because the second portion of His eternal will stipulates certain duties which can exist only in the social system, and which man could only have an opportunity of discharging as being associated with his fellows in societies, communities and nations. In no other condition can such relative duties exist. This social state implies a diversity of conditions among those who compose it, else the relative duties implied in the law would at once be abolished. Hence, then, inequality of condition must have been in the eternal mind, coeval with the law. It is the variety which makes men necessary to each other in the social body, and puts upon them all the relative duties which the law respecting our neighbor comprehends.

But this diversity is at once a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing, inasmuch as God intended it to be a source of righteousness and happiness to man. It is a curse, in that man himself, by abusing this wonderful and mysterious appointment, has almost invariably made it productive of the most fatal and heart-rending evils. Mankind by mankind groans under affliction and suffering. "Man's inhumanity to man, makes countless thousands mourn."

If the law with respect to our neighbor were respected, this DIVERSITY would infallibly prove to be a most blessed and merciful dispensation. Man would not so often complain in bitterness, that God hides His countenance and covers Himself with darkness. Nor would he be compelled to mourn in sadness over the scene of man overcoming man—the strong oppressing the weak—the rich the poor—the great the small, and the high the low.

As we approach the law respecting all these relative duties to our neighbor, it would be well, probably, to direct your attention shortly to the two features of that "*Epitome*" which comprehends and is supposed by the particular laws of the Second Table. "Love thy neighbor as thyself," is a precept which inculcates the purest, most magnanimous and most universal philanthropy. It is the moving spring of that charity which covers a multitude of sins—which is the milk of the gospel, the glory of religion, and the sublimity of Christianity—that queen of Christian graces which outshines faith, even that faith which brings heaven down to earth, wherein the substance of all our hopes is seen as in a glass, and by which the glories and mysteries of the invisible world sweep themselves before the soul. This charity is also better than hope. Hope shall be lost in "a full fruition," when Gabriel's trumpet shall awake the dead; it will be swallowed up in reality as the crashing world will disappear. But charity shall remain fresh and immortal, like the soul itself, as long as eternal ages will continue to roll away, while the bright glimpses of faith will lose themselves in the

eternal tide of heaven's glory, and the resplendent visions of hope will be more than realized in the abyss of that felicity which has no name.

"Do unto all men as ye would they should do unto you," is the practical feature of this "*Epitome*," the other being the INWARD AFFECTION or moving principle. This is the outward action, the visible evidence, the palpable testimony of the completion of the ever blessed duty of charity or love to man. If we admire a natural benevolence, how much more that benevolence which is the source of an exhaustless flood of kindness and love, surging always from the renewed heart. Like the loving mother, from the treasures of whose breasts the children draw their kindest nourishment, so at the shrine of Christian charity may all the sons of men come, without fear, and draw thence the treasures of a pure and universal love. This is the soft virtue which quenches the devastating flame of anger, and extinguishes for ever the consuming fires of revenge. It subdues and mollifies the implacable determinations of the will, and casts abroad a calming oil upon the troubled waters of all our passions. It goes far beyond the limits of cold justice, and reaches far onward to the realms of a warm, merciful and Christian equity, the boundless confines of which can alone check its overflowings. It turns away with horror from all unkind feelings, words and actions, but looks steadfastly to the interests, comforts and prosperity of all without distinction. All injury, all cruelty, all injustice, all ill-will, wrong and oppression retire before the beams of its boundless compassion, its sweeping sympathy and resplendent liberality. This is Christian philanthropy.

Now, my brethren, we will glance at the extent of the obligation we are under to put this charity into practice, or at the rule by which the practice of it is to be regulated. Some conclude, at first sight, that the precept, "do unto your neighbor as you would have him do unto you," calls upon us to do unto our neighbor *whatever* we might wish him to do unto us. If this were so, we would have the mere WISHES of men, however sinful and unwise they might be, as our guides in the practice of Christian charity. A man, no doubt, is required to do unto his neighbor as he would wish his neighbor to do unto him, if such wish would be consistent with his duty to God and his neighbor. If a man should wish his neighbor to rob for him, he is by no means required to do it. If he should wish him to do some impossibility, he is by no means called upon to do or attempt it. If a man should wish his neighbor to do something which would be detrimental to his own interest and prosperity, or that of his family, he is by no means required to comply. A man wishing from his neighbor anything unreasonable, sinful, offensive to conscience, or greatly inconvenient, or really hurtful, he is by no means bound, on account of his wish, to do the same, because the law prohibits both the doing and the wishing of such things.

We must do unto our neighbor as we would have him do unto us, in such a way as we will not infringe upon the will of God, or in a manner which will be governed by those rules which govern us in our duties to God, our neighbor and ourselves. No man should certainly wish anything from his neighbor, but what he himself could or would be willing to do for his neighbor, without intrenching upon the laws of God, the spirit of revelation, or the dictates of conscience, or on the eternal rules of right.

But does a rich man do his duty by not relieving a poor man, because he does not wish the poor man to relieve him? By no means; for the absence of the wish, on the part of the rich man, does not exempt him from the duty of relieving the poor. If he were poor, he would certainly wish to be relieved, therefore he must suppose himself in the poor man's place—duly weigh and consider his distress, and whatever he could fairly and reasonably expect in the shape of relief from the rich man, he is bound by the precept to tender to the poor. When the rich man supposes himself in circumstances of poverty and distress, he will surely have the wish, and think it reasonable and dutiful, that those in different circumstances should relieve him. Hence it is our duty, in many cases, even when we have neither the wish nor the need that our neighbor should do anything for us, that we do many things for him the same as if we had the wish and the need. We see, then, that the rule respecting our duty to our neighbor, imports nothing more than this: That whatever we can, consistently with Christian honor and justice, with reason and conscience, desire of our neighbor in our own circumstances; whatever would become him, in our circumstances, to do to us in charity and consistent with his duty towards God, his neighbor and himself, we are certainly obliged to do the same unto him. This is indeed showing that we love our neighbor as ourselves.

The particular laws supposing the general law respecting the duties of man to man, are reduced in the Decalogue to the number of six—the first of which is the text. It especially relates to the duty of children to their parents, according to the flesh. But the Church teaches that its obligation extends much further. In her catechism, we find that it legislates for those duties we owe our superiors of every kind. She, as the commissioned guardian of truth and the expounder of duty, teaches that this law obliges us not only to honor our natural parents, but also all such persons as stand in certain relations to us analogous to father and mother, or to whom we stand in a certain relation similar to that of children to parents.

The following instances from Scripture will show what I mean. Joseph was called a father to Pharaoh, because he was "Lord over all his house, and a ruler throughout the land." Job was a "father to the poor," because he searched out their cause. The Levite, who came to dwell in the land of Micah, became unto him a father, because he was consecrated priest

over Micah's house. This same Levite became a father to a whole tribe, because they took him to be their priest. As Elijah was swept up to heaven by a whirlwind in a chariot of fire, Elisha cries, "My father, my father," because his mantle covered him with the spirit of prophecy. The servants of Naaman, the leper, called him father, because he was their master. Joash, king of Israel, calls Elisha father, because he gave victory to her chariots and strength to her horsemen. St. Paul calls himself father to the Corinthians, because he had begotten them in the gospel. We are not, then, to understand our natural parents alone, as meant by the expression "father and mother" in the commandment, although they include them. The obligation of the law implies our duties, not only to our natural parents, but also those duties we owe persons whose office, position, age, dignity, or some other superiority demands from us some particular homage, respect or obedience. Hence, the church has laid out the important relations of life, as follows: 1. Of children to parents. 2. Of the people to those who rule over them. 3. Of scholars to teachers and governors. 4. Of ordinary Christians to their spiritual pastors or ministers. 5. Of servants to masters. 6. Of the young to their superiors in age. 7. Of the poor and lowly to their superiors in station and dignity. And some add, very properly, of WIVES to HUSBANDS. This law, then, includes all the duties which these chief relations in life imply, and all the other minor duties which may be reasonably and justly referred to them. It does more. In its equity, it requires from all, who are to be honored by us, a return of duty, because they are to be so honored. Hence it legislates for parent as well as child, for ruler as well as subject, for master as well as servant, and so on. If our relations to certain persons make it our duty to honor them, surely the equity of the thing would require from such persons, who also stand in certain relations to us, a return of duty, and so to conduct themselves towards us, as that they may discharge the duties which these very relations necessarily imply and demand. Accordingly, then, must we treat of this comprehensive law.

The first duty inculcated by this law, is the honoring of our natural parents, and it is accompanied with a special promise in the Decalogue itself. It is a duty of all others the most natural and reasonable. "*Honor*," in the sense implied here, comprehends all the love which the child should have for the parent; all the obedience which that love would dictate; all the respect and esteem which the tender nature of the relation supposes; all the gratitude which is grounded in a sense of deep and lasting obligation, and all the succor and help which the parent naturally and justly may demand from the child.

The relation existing between parent and child, is the sweetest, tenderest and closest upon earth. Nature has bound the parent and child together

with cords which the grave itself cannot cut asunder. They will be parent and child long, long after this world will sink away into night and ruin. The relation is eternal. The felicity of the household, of society and of the nation, greatly depends upon its proper culture, for its influences are felt vividly wherever man may dwell. Disobedient children will dishonor every other relation of life, and careless parents will do the same.

The child is to love its parents, because, like the heavenly Father, they loved it first. From the moment we were conceived in the womb, our lives, our very existence was wrapt up with them in the most mysterious way. From the moment our infant eyes opened to the light of day, their nursing hands sustained our weakness and ministered to our little wants, which we ourselves could neither express nor satisfy. The MOTHER—'tis the sweetest word in human language!—the mother from day to day rocked the cradle and sang us to our slumbers, as if her very life depended upon the issue. Our infant food was taken from the deep and hidden fountains of her bosom, wherein a heart was pulsating for us with undivided and unwearied affection. She soothed our infant cares and suffering with the tenderest attentions, while her heart was gushing over with warm prayers, which surrounded us with guardian angels. She watched with fond and jealous anxiety, the growing form and developing mind, caressing the one with the earnest of an undying love, and filling the other with teachings which were breathed into her own soul by the inspiration of God Himself. She smoothed the commencement of life's rough journey, prepared our unsteady feet for the weary pilgrimage, and defended us from a thousand impending dangers which we ourselves could neither see nor overcome. While the bitterness of many sorrows might be crushing her own heart, while her spirit might be weeping under the smittings of life's ills and trials, her affection and anxiety for us stood fast and unchanged. Friends might take a long journey and forsake us, the rags and scantiness of poverty might become our inheritance, all the world might forget us and treat us as the outcasts of men, but the mother could not forget the fruit of her womb. The constancy of her love is almost compared to that of God's love. "A mother *may* forget her sucking child." It is only BARELY POSSIBLE, but God can *never* forget. Years of sorrow and suffering may blight her heart, yet there always remains in it a green and a tender spot for her offspring. From our infancy to our age, the lambent flame of maternal love flickers not; the winds and tempests of this wilderness cannot blow it out, nor can the deep snowdrifts of these wintry wastes prevent its pencilled beams from reaching the tender plants which she would have bud and blossom in her heart. Let our condition in life be what it may, in misfortune or fortune, the spirit of the mother will go with us wherever we wander, and will attend us like an anxious shade. If we are in sorrow, the

maternal tears will well out and flow in pure sympathy; if in joy, the maternal smile will shed a genial beam over the brightness of our prosperity. All our happiest recollections, like a sparkling constellation, cluster around her knee. Our days of innocence and peace fled away in her companionship. We can remember that her teachings were sweet, and that her chidings were gentle; that her voice was more pleasant to us than the sighing of the summer wind, and her face fairer, more welcome to us, than the holy harvest moon. She it was who planted in our breasts the earliest seeds of virtue, and nursed them there until our hearts emitted a holy odor and burned for the perfection of good. She is often, as it were, a martyr for her offspring, even while experiencing no return of love or sympathy from them. She often endangers both her soul and body for their happiness and comfort, even while she has the sad knowledge of the fact, that she is uncared for or forgotten by them. And even on her very bed of death, when sinking into the cold and skeleton arms of the king of terrors, her last prayer, her last sigh, her last look is given for the children she leaves behind, to be buffeted by the storms of life, when she will be far, far away, and unable to help, relieve, comfort or sustain them in the hour of trial.

And what may we say of the sterner parent—the father. Although his affection is expressed in a less softening and winning manner, yet his offices partake no less of that pure and undying love of which the child is too often the abusing and unworthy recipient. He it is who procures a home and shelter, and provides food and raiment; who surrounds us with all the necessities and comforts of life. He goes out into the world and meets with all its cares and experiences all its cold and stern repulses, that his children may be fed, warmed and clothed. He toils in the heat of summer and amid the snows of winter, without murmur or complaint; up with the dawn of day, and often wasting the midnight oil; his energies often overtaxed, his body wearied and his mind harrassed with serious cares, that his little ones may be provided for. He arms himself for the battle of life, that his offspring may be above the cold charities of the world, and that his family may enjoy every temporal comfort and blessing. It is his strong and ready arm that secured us from wrong, oppression and injustice, and defended us when we were unable to defend ourselves. It is he who provided us with the blessings of education, and all the other necessary preparative qualifications to enter upon the great stage of life for ourselves. He took a part in all our joys and sorrows, corrected us in mercy and prudence when we had gone astray, and encouraged us in his ripened wisdom and experience when we had done well. One great aim of his whole life was to place his children beyond want and above humiliating dependence, and to leave to their enjoyment a competency when he should be mingled with his mother dust.

Is it possible, then, after the toils, the cares, and sweet offices of our parents, performed for us their children, that we would dare to withhold from them the love, the obedience, and the gratitude which not only the relation itself calls for, but also which the law of God so loudly demands? Is it possible that children can be found who will not tender the reverence and esteem to their parents, which God Himself so positively declares to be their due? It is true that no child can help feeling an instinctive love for the parent, but this falls far short of what we understand by filial duty. Filial love and esteem are much holier and exalted things than mere instinct. The lower animals blindly obey the impulses of instinct, without reason or understanding, because the end of it is not in the creature but in the Creator. There is no promise given to instinct, but the law with respect to filial duty is the first of promise. This duty is a reasonable and enlightened office, which includes gratitude, or a deep sense of obligation for the kindness and labors of parental affection; charity for the foibles, shortcomings and infirmities; reverence for the persons and wishes, which implies a ready will to please them in all things, and a fear to offend them in anything; a patient and meek submission to their corrections, respect for their advice and teaching, and a steady determination to succor them in old age and in the hour of misfortune, if such be possible; full and ready obedience to them in all things which are lawful; a cheerful and unwearied execution of their behests, even should such run counter to our own inclinations. The law is absolute—the rule is universal—“Children obey your parents in all things;” and the only restriction to such obedience is immediately added by the Apostle, “Children obey your parents in all things IN THE LORD.” This love and honor are not to be given to one parent only, if we have two. The law requires that both be treated alike, the mother to be honored as the father, and the father as well as the mother. While honoring the one we must not dishonor the other, for each has equal claims upon our esteem and obedience, and each has such high calls upon our love and gratitude, that nothing on earth can excuse us in being derelict in our duties towards them.

Nothing can be more cruel, nothing more heartless, than the want of due love and reverence in a child towards its parents. It is a picture of the darkest ingratitude and depravity. Instinct itself cries loudly against it—nature, reason and revelation denounce it as a crime worthy of the fiercest judgments and the most signal punishments. That we could forget the companions of our earliest days, the guardians and nourishers of our tenderest years, the sweet sympathizers with all our joys and sorrows, those who tended us in our weakness and defenselessness, and in their meridian of love would not even suffer the winds of heaven to blow too rudely upon us, those who abode with us in sunshine and in shower, who loved us with a

love which the grave itself cannot extinguish—that we could forget them, I say, is a frightful and a crushing possibility. But that there are children who not only forget their parents, but also help to drag down their grey hairs with shame and sorrow to the grave, we have no doubt at all. Bear witness to this, California, thou land of ten thousand wrecks, for against the day of reckoning a flood of parental tears are treasured on high—a long coursing stream of parental sighs is gone up to the throne of God, and hath already risen in judgment against you—a countless array of bleeding and broken hearts of parents are crying for vengeance to come upon thee speedily. A cry comes forth from the sleeping dead, terribly heavy with cursings and judgment! You have robbed an army of parents of their darlings—you have left them without a single hope but the dismal one of the dark and lonely tomb! What strange, dark thoughts people the bosom when we contemplate the disobedience of children to parents; a crime which outrages instinct itself, belies nature, and puts reason and revelation to the blush! How the soul recoils from looking fully upon the damning truth. Parental affection forgotten, counsels of love despised, the kindest offices of life repaid with unsparing ingratitude, love with rudeness and contempt, numberless benefits met by disobedience, fond hopes cruelly extinguished for ever by filial prodigality, high expectations and bright dreams mantled with impenetrable gloom by filial turpitude and crime. Oh, perish the man who is so devoid of heart, feeling and compassion; banish him from among men, for he is no man—he is a miracle of ingratitude. How is it that a man can steel his heart against the first duty of nature? how is it that he can banish from his bosom the sacred and gushing recollections of home—those sweet memories which center in them who nursed him from infancy to manhood? How is it that he can turn away from that blanched cheek and silvered lock? How is it that he can close his ear to that weak and trembling voice, eloquent with an imperishable love? How is it that he can put speed to those tottering limbs, as they hasten to a sorrowful grave?—can direct the barbed and poisoned arrows of grief against that head, already crushed under the press of years and sorrow? Oh, how can a man put a crown of thorns upon that brow, already bleeding with the infirmities of age, and saturate the dying pillow of father and mother with the burning tears of a broken and desolate heart?

But certain duties are owing by parents to their children. Between parent and child there are mutual dependencies; they have, also, mutual rights; hence there are mutual duties. The parent owes his child love—not the love of instinct, but the reasonable love of a reasonable parent. Such love includes three duties, viz.: careful training, providing, and sustaining. We are told that he who provides not for his own house, “is worse than an infidel.” This does not mean merely to provide the bare

necessaries of life which instinct itself teaches, but many other things which befit the interesting and tender relation of parent and child. Parents are to provide their children, when the proper time comes, with a useful, virtuous and religious education, so that when they come of age they may provide all things honestly for themselves, and that they may become exemplary Christians, and thereby useful and reliable members of society. Parents are especially commanded to bring up their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," hence the parent, in one sense, has a commission from God Himself, to exercise a part of the sacerdotal office for the benefit of his children, *i. e.*, to instruct them in all duty, to teach them the Christian religion, to set its hopes before them and impress upon them its high obligations and its exalted motives. It is also necessary that such instruction be rendered effectual upon the conduct of the child, by the example of the parents, so that the instruction may not become as "pearls cast before swine." The parent must bring his children in infancy to the baptismal font, that they may receive the seal of the Christian covenant—that they may not grow up like uncircumcised Philistines, but may have a right, as the children of God, to all the privileges of the Church. The parent must teach them to respect and reverence everything relating to God and His Church, so that when they grow up, the Church may not be offended in them, nor religion scandalized. The parent must govern his children well—encouraging them when they do right, and promptly punishing them when they do wrong. In ruling over them, the parent must be gentle, even and courteous—not passionate, heady, capricious, foolishly indulgent nor tyrannical, lest the children may be discouraged or become disobedient. The parental government must be such as will secure the child's respect and affection, and at the same time his prompt obedience; hence the government must be mild, yet strict—it must display no passion, peevishness nor tyranny, but all that which might be referred to love. On the other hand, it must not be lax or capricious, sometimes loose and sometimes strict, or the child will soon lose all respect for it. It must not be partial, overlooking some faults and correcting others, but be grave, prompt and judicious in all matters, great and small. The parent, in his government, may be compared to a bishop—he must "be so merciful that he be not too remiss, and so minister discipline that he forget not mercy.

SERMON VIII.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.—(CONTINUED.)

TEXT—Exodus xx, 12: "*Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*"

WE have proposed to take up the chief relations of life in detail, as they are specified in the Church catechism. Having considered already that existing between parent and child, we begin to-day with the one between GOVERNOR and SUBJECT.

The various forms of government in the world, of course do not do away with the obligation of the apostolic precept, which inculcates subjection to "the powers that be." They are ordinances of God, "to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well." Hence, every man is bound in duty to respect the executive of any government, of whatever form, for conscience sake. As is generally supposed, the duties of the governed and him governing, are not the dicta of mere opinion or choice, but they arise out of the necessity of the case, and the gospel speaks of them as things of a moral nature. There is no such thing as perfect independence or liberty, however much men may talk about it. It is a fond fancy, a pleasing chimera. The very existence of government supposes subjection, and subjection is nothing else than a dependence or kind of bondage. A government may be as enlightened and liberal as possible, yet so long as it is government, it must necessarily subject those governed to obedience, and obedience is a kind of servitude. Since crime must be punished, life and property protected, order and society preserved, men must be ruled; and being ruled by force of law, this thing of entire liberty has no existence whatever but in the day-dreams of noisy patriots and philanthropic fanatics. Government demands the homage of respect from the well doer, of fear from the wicked, of obedience from all. A demagogue, for unworthy ends, may make the multitude believe that they are no longer subjects but sovereigns, yet there is neither philosophy, reason, nor religion in his wicked doctrine. "We are PERFECTLY FREE," is saying nothing less than that there is no law, to which the very existence of society gives the lie, because law is necessary to society.

To show that government or political power is an ordinance or appointment of God, we have only to look at the institution as it originally existed. This power at first was delegated by God Himself to PARENTS, which fact implies the necessity of governing and being governed. It also shows us that the intention of the institution was to keep man in a state of subjection, that he might fear to do evil and be encouraged to do well. It was next delegated to patriarchs, then to rulers and judges, and last of all to kings. So we see that government, in whatever form it may assume, is after all a kind of parental authority or prerogative. But it would be extreme folly in the child to say that subjection to parental restraint or authority is a matter of his own choice, and to act accordingly, because it was not of his own choice that he became a child. It would also be as foolish for the parent to say that he became the ruler of his child from choice, and to act accordingly. No one believes that the child had any choice in the matter, nor even the parent himself, because the moment the relation of parent and child came to exist, that moment, without reference to choice at all, were governing on the one hand and being governed on the other necessitated, and that moment did the obligation involved in the relation, become imperative and absolute. It is exactly similar in the case of ruler and subject. Although the kind of ruler and manner of ruling may be a matter of choice, yet the simple necessity of ruling and being ruled, does away with all choice in this particular. This simple necessity, being an unalterable appointment of God for moral ends and purposes, the obligations involved in it are as immutable and binding as those in the case of parent and child. If it were a mere choice on the part of the people to be governed, their obligations to be ruled would only be binding upon them just as long as they might choose to consider them so, and no longer. Then government would not be an appointment of God, but the result of an ordinary compact entered into for the sake of expediency, which thing would imply no great moral obligation whatever. This, although it might not possibly do away with the object of government, would make all government extremely uncertain, because it would justify the people (if they should happen to choose or think it expedient), to revolutionize, to overthrow, to change, over and over again, every government as often as their fancy might dictate. This would imply that the expediency, or even the necessity of government, results from choice, which is a gross absurdity. It would also justify the people in having no government at all, which the nature of the case sternly contradicts.

The Scriptures, my brethren, are the best political philosophy in the world, being the oracles of Him who is the origin of all power, and the originator and upholder of all government. They abound with the most positive and explicit teachings on this subject, to the effect that the gov-

erned are as much bound to discharge certain duties to the government, not because they choose, but because they are obligated, as children are to discharge their particular duties to parents. The ruler, on the other hand, is as much bound to fulfill his duties to the subject, not indeed of choice, but of obligation, as the parent is to discharge his particular duties to the child, because the obligation, in both relations, are fixed by the same wise God, on the same unalterable and necessary principles of right. Government, then, is an institution of God and not of public choice. The only thing left to such choice is its form, because God, for wise purposes, did not see fit to restrict man to any particular form so long as the original intention of the institution could be carried out. Let the form be what it may, the reciprocal rights, liberties, comforts and good of all parties concerned, are to be maintained under the strictest obligations.

The first duty, then, to be observed by the subject, is *submission*. We are to submit to the king, or other ruler, for the Lord's sake. This is the gospel law, which nothing on earth can abolish, unless, indeed, such ruler so behave himself as to infringe upon the unalienable rights and liberties of the subject, by becoming a tyrant or abandoning all the essential and fundamental principles of righteous and regular government. The subject is also obligated to maintain both the laws upon which such government is founded and which it administers, not only by obeying them himself, but also by seeing that they are obeyed by all under his jurisdiction, and, if possible, by all those on whom his teaching and example can have an influence. He must live quietly, soberly and orderly, under the law as it is executed by the ruler, always observing the rule, "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." He must support the government by a contribution of his means, and if in danger of being dishonored or overthrown, his duty calls him to its defense, either by his counsels in the halls of his nation, by supplying its officials, according to his ability, with the usual means of defense, or by taking the field himself in its cause as the devoted patriot and soldier. He must not keep sedition secret, nor connive at it, nor wink at it, but must give timely notice thereof to his government, using all the lawful means in his power to crush it himself. He must bring the lighted torch into the dark places of conspiracy, that his country may have timely warning to escape calamity, and by the arm of its power lay hold upon the discontented. He must discountenance every kind of rebellion and counteract it to the best of his power, ere the storm breaks forth to desolate and disorganize society. He must cultivate a due respect and esteem for the religious institutions of his country, and must banish all mal-content from his breast. He must not resist his government until it so entrench upon his rights and liberties, as that his conscience will dictate that resistance, which is sometimes necessary, and therefore lawful.

There are here two questions to be considered. What is to be done when the civil power makes laws and demands obedience to them, which would cause the subject to transgress the laws of God and offend his conscience? What is to be done by the subject, when a lawful matter of difference exists between the State and him—when the ground of complaint on the part of the subject is an unqualified encroachment on the part of the State, on the public rights and liberties? What kind of resistance is lawful, or is any kind so? The first may be answered in a few words. In all cases we are to obey God rather than man, and like Daniel of old, we must submit patiently and trustingly to the unjust punishments for our disobedience to the unrighteous laws of man. We are not so much to fear him who can kill the body only, as Him who can cast both body and soul into hell. The other question is somewhat more difficult to answer. It must be the first duty of the subject to weigh the matter well, to see whether it be a just cause for resistance to the civil authorities or no. If it be a just cause, he must discover who is right and who is wrong, and then act as his own conscience and the gospel precepts may direct him. But when there is no question of conscience, no real infringement on the rules of Christianity or on the public rights and liberties, it is, without doubt, his duty to take sides with the civil authority, since in such a case he is bound by the law of God to support and sustain the civil magistrate for the Lord's sake. But if the civil magistrate should be guilty of encroachments on the civil and religious liberties of the people—if he should so abuse his power as to render the people seriously unhappy by trampling upon their rights—if he should practise injustice with the strong hand of oppression, and turn his government into a complete misrule, what kind of resistance ought the people to adopt that their rights and liberties may be secured to them? When a case of mal-administration is clearly made out, the resistance of public opinion or sentiment is generally sufficient to put an end to it. This kind of resistance is quite admissible, when the great mass of the people experience the evil, and when there is no other way left to counteract it, and when the public good will be subserved by it. But even in such a case, such resistance must be made in a peaceful and Christian spirit. No tumult, riot or violence may accompany it, else it will become unlawful, and more than likely defeat its own ends, simply because it would be “doing evil that good may come.” It must be done in such a manner as will place the ruler in a fitter position, surround him with better persons and more propitious circumstances, in order that the public good may be secured in peace as becomes Christians. But is the resistance of arms justifiable at all? It is scarcely so. Certain extreme cases, indeed, seem to justify this kind of resistance—but since misrule generally carries along with it its own cure; since the generality of evils which a nation or

community can complain of against the civil magistrate, may generally be got rid of by a gentler kind of resistance than that of arms, it would certainly seem that armed rebellions cannot find justification save in very extreme cases, and happily these are few.

We can suppose a case. Say that the civil magistrate, by the aid of a mercenary army, compelled the people to surrender their rights which the laws of God give them, and which the laws of man ought to allow them to enjoy; say that all the laws of the Constitution were overthrown, and that the ruler employed a foreign sword to subject the people to his oppression, to sacrifice their dearest and highest interests—that he treats with unrestrained mockery and contempt the authorities of the Constitution, and that his object is clearly to subvert all liberty and do away with the ends of all right government; and that he would do all this by the force of arms, in the most malignant hostility to the wishes of the great mass of the people. In such a case as this, and in all parallel thereto, the resistance of arms would be justifiable, *i. e.*, if the people would be deprived of every other means of redress. But the subject has often thought it a justifiable cause why he should renounce allegiance to the ruler, that the ruler persecuted him for the sake of religion. The church in her infancy underwent a number of the most frightful persecutions, yet in no instance did she rise in arms against the government which persecuted her. She only taught forbearance, meekness and patience, and deemed it a glory to be called upon to suffer for Him who purchased her with His blood. The subject, therefore, is called upon now to emulate her example under the same, and, indeed, under all circumstances, because his Master endured the same meekness and patience.

There are many other questions involved in this subject which we might consider with profit to ourselves, but not having the space, we will desist with the injunction: let each citizen be guided in such matters by his conscience, the precepts of the gospel, and by the examples of the best and most eminent Christians.

Since the ruler and subject have reciprocal rights and duties, we will name a few of the ruler's chief duties, and then pass on. All his counsels, public acts, designs and enterprises, must be carefully ordered for the good of the people. He must take care to avoid oppression and injustice, to administer the law with firmness, prudence, gentleness, wisdom and moderation. He must be as a father unto his people, by providing them with the best and readiest means of education, and by securing to them all civil and religious liberty. He must not only by law, but by his own precept and example, foster and protect Christianity among his people, and use every lawful means in his power to eradicate from their moral condition, all disorder, all vice, all discontent, all enormity and all irreligion, in order that they may be a powerful, happy and prosperous people.

We come now to the **SCHOLAR** and **MASTER**. The scholar stands in somewhat the same relation to the master as the ordinary Christian does to his spiritual teacher, and the master to the scholar as the spiritual teacher to the ordinary Christian. The duties of the scholar are simply these: to receive the instructions of the master with thankfulness and respect; to be diligent in making proper use of their teachings; to be obedient and respectful in their deportment towards them, and by all their conduct to encourage them in their arduous and important labors. The duties of the teacher are, in brief, as follows: to be faithful and watchful in all his teachings; to see that they be suitable to the capacity and conducive to the well-being of the scholar; to give to each scholar the necessary instructions according to his need, and in such a manner as will make them the more readily comprehended and the more effectually received; to correct faults, to point out dangers, help out of difficulties, and to encourage all useful study and industry; to punish when there is necessity, and to praise when such would be suitable and profitable, that the scholar may persist in well-doing, and to be diligent in guiding him to that knowledge which is most valuable and praiseworthy, by the most suitable and effectual means and in the most approved manner.

We will next say a few words respecting the duties of **SERVANT** and **MASTER**. The relation of master and servant must exist as long as there will be diversity of conditions in life. God has called some to labor while His providence raises others above it in wealth and fortune. To prevent this relation from being abused, the Scripture legislates the duties which are to be observed on each side. Servants are commanded to "count their own masters worthy of all honor." This, of course, teaches diligence in the discharge of everything committed to them—faithfulness and honesty in every particular of their servitude; cheerfulness and care in the management and execution of their master's business; respect and obedience to their commands, and esteem for their persons and positions. Servants, in fact, must make it a matter of conscience to discharge all the duties included in submission to the "yoke;" abstaining from all peculation, theft and fraud, wasting of their master's goods, and mispending of their time. They must show the same alacrity, cheerfulness and honesty in their masters' absence as in their presence. Their service must not be for the eye of man, but from the heart as being for the eye of God. These, in brief, comprehend the duties of the servant, for which the equity of the law demands a return from the master. Masters are not less amenable to this law than are servants. Their duty is to conduct themselves towards their servants with condescension, kindness and affability; to avoid being tyrannical or supercilious, and to respect their feelings; not to treat them with harshness or contempt, nor to lay upon their shoulders unreasonable burdens which

would cruelly tax their strength and patience ; to be humane in word and in deed ; to secure to them what will add to their comfort, happiness and contentment ; strict honesty in paying them their hire ; to be punctual in fulfilling what was promised, as to time and amount ; not to demand from them what would be an oppression ; to allow them a reasonable time for God's service, for rational recreation and for rest ; to instruct them in their duty with gentleness ; to inculcate upon them by precept and example, the practice of religion, and to see that their interests, temporal and spiritual, are attended to—because in God's sight all men are equal, as having one master and judge, who is in heaven—who will bring master and servant equally to account in that day when all distinctions of earth will be done away with forever.

The chief duties of the YOUNG to the OLD, are these : The young are to pay due regard and respect to the experience and wisdom of the aged, while overlooking their foibles and infirmities, in charity and consideration. They are to receive their counsels with gravity, neither insulting their grey hairs nor affronting their age by making light of what they advise. Let me say to the young before me, that notwithstanding Young Americanism may be a fine thing, yet Young Americanism should always remember the classical proverb : "Know all men from youth to age, that the gods hate impudence in youth." Not only do the gods hate impudence in youth, but all good and sensible men are exceedingly disgusted with precocious impertinence. Premature independence is downright impudence. The young should remember that the day will come when the truth will bitterly force itself upon them, that age with all its infirmities and tardiness is a proper object of youthful respect and honor. The aged, on the other hand, are to take a kind of charge over the young ; never to withhold their counsels when necessary ; to give them the benefit of their ripened experience and wisdom ; to teach them patience and prudence by example as well as by precept ; to spare not reproof when they see the fires of youth become too hot, and to bring the treasures of calm and frigid age, the unfevered and serene counsels which will check the impetuosity of youth. It also should be their care to inspire the youth to an emulation of their virtues, and to pursue that course which, when the almond tree will flourish, will make their silver locks a crown of glory ; and, above all, they must be careful to make the young "remember their Creator in the days of their youth."

The duties of the low in station to the dignified and of the poor to the rich, are as follows : They are neither to envy them for their dignity or possessions, nor are they to conduct themselves with sullenness or bitterness, but on the contrary, since they are called upon to give honor to whom honor is due, they must award proper respect and honor to their more for-

tunate and more dignified brethren. They must not hate them nor desire to do them any malice or wrong. They must not endeavor to arouse prejudice against them by lying or evil speaking, but behave towards them discreetly, charitably and courteously, according to their several stations. The rich and dignified, on the other hand, must remember that in the sight of God all men are equal, and that He who gave can also take away—hence they must not bear themselves towards the poor or lowly with offensive pride, contempt or arrogance. They must by no means despise them because they are poor and of low degree, but rather relieve their poverty and cover their nakedness. They are to remember that rags often hide the noble Christian, the unostentatious patriot, the glowing heart and virtuous mind; that under a mean exterior, all the requisites of the truly noble and great repose, and that in this world of suffering and poverty, “there is many a delicate and beauteous flower, which, though it blushes unseen and wastes its fragrance on the desert air,” yet for beauty and loveliness would grace the kingly hall, and load the atmosphere of the noble’s bower with the richest and sweetest perfumes. The rich and dignified should remember that with the grave end all earthly distinctions, and that small and great will meet on the same level before Jehovah’s awful throne—that titles and trappings cannot go with them to the home of the dead, but that mercy, charity and humility will do more for them in the hour of judgment, than all the honors of life—all the riches of the world.

But now, my brethren, I have come to the most delicate relation of life, viz.: HUSBAND and WIFE—in order to point out to you a few of its chief duties. Probably I am somewhat a blind guide in the matter, but since I have followed the old beaten track in all the other relations of life, I will do the same in this—nothing can be said new or striking. The wife is the keeper, in a great degree, of the husband’s honor, and to a greater degree the keeper of his happiness; therefore her conduct, in all things, should be extremely judicious and circumspect. She is bound by the sacred bans of holy wedlock, to love, honor and obey her husband, and she must, therefore, keep her virtue as pure as the crystal well or as the virgin snow. The marriage bed must not be defiled. She must not be so proud and heady as to exercise the prerogatives of mistress and master, because God made her subject to man as a helpmeet to him. She must conduct herself modestly, soberly, mildly and courteous. Her speech to him must be kind, affable and discreet, that there be no contention, for “the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.” A shrew does violence to the household, and it is a hard matter to tame her. The wife must love her husband and none besides him, because the Josephs of this excessively polite age are like angels’ visits, few and far between; hence if the wife be faithless and headstrong, a whole family is easily ruined and disgraced. She should

have no secrets from her husband, no sly amours, idle flirtations or girlish freaks. She must consult with him on all family matters, and be obedient to his commands for the good and comfort of her house. She must submit with patience to becoming reproof, and be contented with what can be honestly provided for her. She must harbor no secret dislike for her husband, nor manifest such by treating him scornfully, lightly or shrewishly, in public or in private. She must sacrifice her own will and inclinations, when she discovers that they would be prejudicial to his happiness and interests. She must not give way to railing when reproved, nor irritate him by returning silly and angry answers, but on the contrary she must relieve his sorrows by a cordial sympathy, and enhance his pleasure by a warm and hearty participation. Her dress must not be outrageously extravagant, as is too often the case, nor must she deem herself above being useful. Her attentions to the husband must not be forced for the sake of mere display, nor must her affection for him be counterfeit—got up for particular occasions and for the eyes of the world. It must be true and constant, as becomes her connubial vow. She must overcome all extravagant habits which she might have contracted, for they will ruinously tax the income of her husband. In fact, the wife must serve the husband as the Church does Christ—making her duties a matter of conscience and not of expediency, and the practice of them a sincere testimony to her faithfulness in the married life.

The husband, on the other hand, must allow his wife to participate in all his property and honor, not as mere acknowledgment of her fellowship with him, but as an earnest of his love for and faithfulness to her. He must not dishonor her bed as some think they have a license to do, but must esteem the wife's honor sacred, and her person the only legitimate and best object of his affections. He must not suffer his affections to be divided, one moment here, another there, but must steadfastly keep them concentrated on his wife, who alone is their deserving object. He must treat her with all respect, kindness and affability in public and private. His words to her must be courteous, chaste and winning, and his conduct in all respects mild, gentle and loving. He must not assert, in a rough manner, that he has authority over her, nor must he demand her obedience to such authority by any harshness or tyranny. He must yield to his wife in all trivial matters, to avoid strife, and suffer her to manage her own affairs without useless annoyance or molestation. He must never reprove her without a sufficient cause, and even then with kindness and caution. He must never try to make her feel that she is an insignificant thing by neglecting her, by bearing himself loftily and proudly towards her, nor must he ever make her feel that she must live with him in fear, on account of his jealous and haughty disposition. He must not act the part of a mean and

petty tyrant by submitting her actions to a strict but insulting scrutiny, nor withholding from her the suitable enjoyment of the reasonable pleasures of life. He must treat her honorably and courteously before children, servants and strangers, and never reprove her but privately, and even then without peevishness or temper. He must remember that his wife has feelings and a temper of her own, and that by rudely assailing her, her affection and respect will soon be weaned from him, and that he will cause her to see him in the light of a petty lord, a mean and vexatious tyrant, unworthy of any obedience or respect whatever. He must not be guilty of continually flattering her, because it may probably end in making her a fool—perhaps worse; but he must be ready at all times to show her all those little attentions and marks of kindness of which the generality of women are so fond. He must insist on nothing which would not become his wife's sex, or that would outrage her delicacy, her virtue or conscience. He must not betray to her any impurity, nor afflict her with the manifestation of any low or beastly habit. He must consult her tastes, respect her opinions, and study her disposition. She must be provided for with care, so that no needless pain or trial may be given her. Her love must be reciprocated with promptness and warmth, else she will grow cold and the house will be ruled by a couple of formal icicles. The husband must teach the children and servants to pay her due obedience and respect, and his own conduct must warn strangers to abstain from attempting any undue familiarities with her and all insulting approaches. His conduct from home must be such as that he can report it to his wife without a blush. The drinking shop must be abandoned, the gambling house must never be visited, all loose habits must for ever be thrown aside, old associations must be forgotten, and the house of the strange woman never be thought of. Regular hours and regular habits, a Christian life, a religious deportment must take the place of all these, or wo, wo to the wretched woman who becomes the victim.

If such a course as I have here laid down, were to be pursued by many wives and husbands in California, how different would the history of the State be? The public prints would not be recording our disgrace in daily lists of suits for DIVORCE. We would not be shocked by the recital of startling crimes committed by faithless women, and by cruel and licentious men. Perjury would be almost silenced—the knife and revolver would be hung up upon the wall, and the gallows itself would be robbed of many of its victims. Society would regain its tone, and our people would at once gain the confidence and respect of mankind. But alas, the marriage compact amongst us seems little better than a frivolous promise—at best as a mere civil contract. This plucks the brightest jewel from the crown of society and tramples it in the mire. Hence we see adultery—a crime of

which we will soon have to speak—stalking in our midst without a blush, and there is scarcely a murmur of disapprobation heard against it. We hear of men who are driven to despair and to all manner of vice, that they may forget the crimes of faithless wives. We hear also of murders committed by the avenging hands of outraged and dishonored husbands. We hear of women deserted by heartless men—left alone in bitterness of heart to struggle through life, burdened with the sole care and support of the traitor's children, with no one to relieve their loneliness or to pity their tears. Intrigues and desertions are almost as common as larcenies, and the public sensibility is scarcely stung. The most criminal of acts is daily brought to light in our very public courts; and if report be tame, the walls of private dwellings and hotels, if they had tongues, could “tales unfold” which would more thoroughly “harrow up the soul” than the sepulchral tones of an angry spectre.

But look at our children—what is their conduct to their parents? All indeed that bad breeding can make it. Before they can with safety leave their mother's apron strings, they betray an independence of action which is portentous of evil. The boy does what he likes, says what he likes, and goes where he likes—and he is pronounced smart!! There are no children here—they are all young gentlemen and ladies. Nor have we servants; these are as ready to command their superiors as their superiors to command them—yea, more so. There are no such things here as dignity and manners; an ignorant swaggerer holds his head as high as the man of acknowledged ability, who stands at the helm of affairs. A proverbial tippler and idler lays claim to as much respect as the best men of the land. To explain the reason of this, would, I fear, be out of place.

There is a promise attached to this commandment in the words, “that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” The land promised was the Land of Caanan, and the possession thereof was to be long and peaceful if the Jew would obey the law. But if the Christian will obey this law, he will enjoy peace all his days—he will be surrounded with all the happiness and pleasures of this life which are the natural effects of obedience to this law, and when he comes to die, since God cannot violate His promise, he will take possession of the heavenly Caanan, as an heir returning from a long journey, to dwell for ever and ever in the home of his Father, where none can disturb him in the possession of his inheritance.

SERMON IX.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

TEXT—Exodus xx, 13 : “*Thou shalt do no murder.*”

THERE are, as I conceive, three kinds of murder : 1st. The unlawful and willful taking of the life of our neighbor upon malice or forethought, in whatever way or by whatever means the crime may be committed. 2d. Self murder or suicide, which is the willful and deliberate taking of our own life. 3d. Heart murder, which is the seeking of another man's blood—the wishing or designing the death of our neighbor, although such design or wish may never be put into practice. We are told that “he who hateth his brother without a cause is a murderer.”

Murder is the last and greatest crime against society which any man may commit. The greatest criminal cannot plunge deeper into the abyss of crime ; it is the final goal of turpitude—the crowning outrage against God and man—the final victory of the arch-fiend over humanity, and the only crime which all nations, heathen as well as Christian, punish with the greatest of human penalties—death.

Although murder is KILLING, yet it must be distinguished from it because it is a killing of a particular kind. Accidental killing is not murder, because there is no premeditation, malice or malignity accompanying the act—no intention or design actuating the killer. Murder must also be distinguished from what is called “lawful killing,” although such be intended or purposed. Lawful killing is intended to meet the ends of justice and law for the sake of society and wholesome government, hence there is no malice in the act, although it may be premeditated—it is only the punishment of murder. The killing of enemies in a just war is not murder, though designed and premeditated. Nor is the killing of a man in self-defense murder, although the act is intended and voluntary. All these are to be distinguished from that crime, because the attendant malignity or malice which constitutes murder does not accompany the killing.

But there is a kind which some think to be murder and others not, of which we will take a very short notice. Is the killing committed in

DUELLING justifiable or no? The teachings of Christianity, beyond all dispute, go against the unlawful killing either of our neighbors or of ourselves. There must be some sufficient ground or cause to render the taking of life lawful or justifiable. No man may dispose of his own life or that of his neighbor, unless he is called upon to hazard it for the sake of religion, the good of society, or for the safety of his government and country. He may also, without blame, hazard his own life in attempting to save that of another. In all such cases, duty calls upon a man, if need be, to lay down his life. And the man who does so, although he has been contemptuously called a suicide to duty, is yet, on the contrary, by the generality of mankind deemed a sincere Christian, who testifies to his faith even unto death—a true and magnanimous patriot who is deserving of the praise and gratitude of his country, and a noble hearted philanthropist. There is no duty involved in duelling which can possibly justify the taking away of our neighbor's life, or the sacrificing of our own. It has no calls whatever but those of mistaken, *i. e.*, false honor. Paley says, "Whatever human life is deliberately taken away, otherwise than by public authority, there is murder. If unauthorized laws of honor be allowed to create exceptions to divine prohibitions, there is an end to all morality as founded in the will of the Deity, and the obligation of every duty, may at one time or other, be discharged by the caprice and fluctuations of fashion." If this be so, DUELLING being ONLY justifiable on the fluctuating laws of a fashionable honor, which differ in various nations and change with the other changes of the age, those who hazard their own lives in it and attempt to take away their neighbors', become at once liable to the serious charges of suicide and murder. He who is killed in a duel, is not only guilty of suicide but also of an attempt to murder his adversary, which, in the sight of God, is murder in the proper sense. And he who kills his adversary in one, is not only guilty of murder properly so called, but also of suicide, inasmuch as he exposed his own life voluntarily and causelessly to be taken away; which thing, in intention, is nothing less than suicide. Duelling can only be justified on the right of man to avenge himself for some real or imaginary injury or insult. Vengeance belongs to God alone, and man is strictly prohibited from seeking it. Hence, since duelling is a mere seeking of vengeance on the part of man, so far from being justified, it is as deeply censurable in the sight of God as murder or suicide, with which we may identify it. The duty of every Christian is not only to return good for evil, but also to chasten his thoughts so that he may feel ready to forgive all injury. The character of the true gentleman is, that he will neither insult or injure his neighbor, and he will not be insulted or injured in turn, but will forgive the insult or injury inflicted. This is the spirit of Christ, and he who has it has certainly the best ideas of honor.

If I should do an injury knowingly or otherwise to any one, it is clearly my duty to hasten a reconciliation with my brother, by making ample reparation if possible, and if not, by suitable apology. And if my brother do an injury to me, it is as clearly my duty to receive his reparation or apology as it is his to make it; and on the other hand, it is as clearly his duty to receive my reparation or apology as it is mine to make it. There can be no law grounded on the fluctuating sentiments of fashionable life, which can possibly change the law of God with respect to murder or suicide. There is no argument of the polished or HONORABLE murderer which can invalidate the unchangeable law—"Thou shalt do no murder." All the great Dukes and Lords that ever lived and deemed themselves the very pink of honor—all the villains that ever reduced seduction to a science or profession—all the great novelists that made blood-thirsty fools of their heroes and viragos of their heroines, or that called the "moon and stars to help them" to disseminate fashionable yet false morality—all the high-toned statesmen that ever uttered ponderous speeches and carried extraordinary measures—all the knights of the bowie-knife and revolver, that ever shed innocent blood in city or backwood—all the bloated, blaspheming ruffians that ever disgraced a Christian people—should they all go hand in hand and be supported by all the beautiful arguments for the fashionable usage of duelling, yet after all, they could make nothing of it but UNQUALIFIED MURDER.

But are there any palliating circumstances which may possibly attend murder? For the honor of humanity, we must allow some. Great and almost irresistible provocation may be taken as a mitigating circumstance. It is not so much a justification of the crime as a reason why the punishment of it should be mitigated. A man may have the misfortune of a hot and almost ungovernable temper. Certainly this is not his fault but his misfortune, yet he knows it to be his duty to overcome it. When, therefore, he suffers his passions to overcome him, it is no longer his misfortune but his fault. When a wanton injury is done such a man, we can easily appreciate his difficulty to exercise Christian patience and forbearance, which is his duty under the circumstances. On account of this great difficulty he has to contend with, it is but justice to make some allowances for him. His temper masters him, and for a time he is afflicted with a short but violent insanity which rendered him all but unaccountable for his actions while it continues. Having had no time for meditation or to calculate the consequences, although there may indeed be a degree of malignity displayed in his action, his punishment is to be mitigated, yet his crime, in the sight of God, is by no means justified. It is the bounden duty of all such men to cultivate good temper, and to pour the oil of Christianity upon the fires of their dispositions; to feel at all times in a state of mind to

receive injury and insult with calmness, and practise placability and forbearance in the hour of greatest trial. Oh, how many things are perpetrated in the rage of passion and heat of anger, which the perpetrator a moment after would give the whole world to have undone. Many a noble, brave and generous minded man, in one moment, while he became an "intellectual savage," destroyed his own peace of mind forever; blasted irrecoverably the prospects of his own family, and forced his friends to seek dishonorable graves. How true is it that a passionate man is his own worst enemy. He may avenge himself upon his enemy, yet there being no wisdom or policy in his revenge, it recoils bitterly back again from his victim upon himself. He punishes the object of his hate, and in so doing he punishes himself. He should indeed remember that the absolute and universal law of "love thy neighbor as thyself," makes no special allowance for him. Men may suppose they do not subtract from the measure of the law by resenting every affront with a high hand, and dealing out vengeance as if God would never take any account. But it is not so, because God lays it down as an unchangeable condition of our own forgiveness, that we be ready to forgive those who trespass against us. The spirit of anger being utterly inconsistent with that of Christianity, to indulge in it, foster it or obey it is a crime of itself, but to commit a crime such as murder under its influence, is only adding crime to crime and aggravating the thing in the sight of God.

But admit that an outrage of such a nature is committed against a man who attempts to destroy the chastity of those dear to him. Say that his honor is brutally assailed in the person of wife, sister or child, or that a blow is struck at all his happiness, which he feels more poignantly than any that the murderer himself could inflict—is the man so injured justified in shedding the blood of him who thus injures? Human nature would almost answer yes. But the unostentatious forbearance of Him who resisted unto death, comes up to contradict the promptings of the unregenerate heart—"do good unto them that despitefully use you." His prayer—"Father forgive them for they know not what they do"—teaches us that we must not even give way to a revengeful and unforgiving spirit; far less that we should put the unrelenting determinations of such a spirit into execution.

But can drunkenness be urged as a palliation for murder? If a violent temper, which is a kind of insanity, if the perpetration of a bitter and cruel outrage, cannot, in the sight of God mitigate, far less justify murder, surely the beastly sin of drunkenness, or any other criminal excitement similar to it, cannot possibly excuse murder or any crime whatever. Sin cannot justify or palliate sin, however much it may aggravate it. The law which forbids murder, forbids also all incitements to it; and violent temper, thirst for vengeance and drunkenness, with many other things, being such incite-

ments, are sternly forbidden, and so far from being a ground of excuse, are really aggravations of the crime.

Having now briefly noticed the kinds of killing which *are not murder*, and a few of the popular excuses which are fastened upon by some to make what is murder lawful or justifiable killing, we will come to the crime itself, and view it in its consequences, that we may avoid whatever tends to it.

There is no man with any decent share of moral susceptibility, but recoils with horror from the bare idea of murder. The man who does not, has hardened his heart by an habitual contemplation of it. Its cruelty and aggravation involve many things, each of which is sufficient to blast the human soul with eternal dismay and cover humanity with a veil of shame. Most other crimes sink away into insignificance before it. There is not a lost spirit in the regions of eternal night, which can boast of a more damning guilt than that involved in murder. The arch-fiend himself can go no further in his enmity to God or man, than does the murderer.

1st. It is a most outrageous affront done to the Most High God. It takes out of His hands one of His most fearful and righteous prerogatives, viz.: the holding of "the issues of life and death." It is a wanton and remorseless destruction of the most beautiful handy work of Jehovah—of those creatures who bear upon their fronts the indelible impress of their great Creator—of those creatures whose faces look proudly to heaven, the home of their immortal souls. It is an injury done Him who can alone claim the right to give and to take away life, being the Lord of all His creatures, and none can blot out His image from the earth in one of them, without at once affronting and injuring Him in a special and singular manner.

2d. It is the foulest and most malignant crime against nature. Our fellow man is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. We have all the same common father and mother. The same ties of love and affection, the same sorrows and the same joys. We have the same hopes and fears, and are traveling to the same silent home. We have all the same common bonds binding us together for mutual defense and protection. All these are the results of one common law in our nature. But murder, at one merciless blow, destroys them all, and by so doing, outrages nature with the greatest possible violence.

3d. It is the greatest crime against society. Society is assailed by it in the rudest manner, and in the most effectual way. Its bands are snapt asunder by this crime of crimes. Its very existence is partially done away with, and should the blows of the assassin be continually repeated, society, in time, would be completely overthrown; humanity stagger to the grave shrieking and covered with bleeding wounds; the human race pass away under the hand of violence, until the murderer would stand alone on an unpeopled and desolated earth, trembling at the guilty throbings of his own heart, and fleeing from the startling echoes of his own guilty voice.

The sun might then refuse to rule the day, and the moon and stars by night—these lights of heaven might be extinguished to this world forever, for there would be none left to complain but the murderer; primeval night might again brood over the face of the deep and eternal darkness cover the everlasting hills, for there would be none but the man of blood left to dwell upon the earth.

4th. It is an awful, an irreparable crime against wife, husband, children, relations and friends. It desolates the wife's home, it covers her hearth with a hoar frost which no prosperity can warm. The undying memories of him who sleeps in the bloodstained winding sheet, will thickly people her bosom, rendering her a victim to the darkest melancholy and most distressing sorrow. It deprives her in one moment of all her proper means of comfort and support, and completely paralyzes her natural energies, leaving her a smitten wreck amid the pitiless storms of life. It clothes her with the weeds of that widow whose very tears are eloquent in the cause of vengeance, and whose grief is a pleader at the throne of God for judgment. It cuts asunder the mysterious, tender and holy bands of matrimony, thereby sundering what God hath put together.

It ruthlessly robs the husband of a most affectionate companion—the object of a nameless solicitude. It wounds his heart with no ordinary wound—a wound which will fester there until its pangs rush through his soul and madden it with an implacable revenge. The agony of its sting may hurry him into the wildest enormities, until he sinks down into the arms of death, a shattered victim to the crime of the assassin. Murder ravishes the sweetest blessings of the child. By it its fairest hopes are extinguished in the blood of the parent—its prospects ruined and its happiness blighted. It strikes down at their feet their natural protectors, and exposes them as orphans to the cold charities of an unthinking world. Despite of God, it gives them the heritage of orphanage, which embitters their life with an anguish little short of that which Hagar experienced when weeping alone in the wilderness over her dying child. There are involved in this crime, to the orphan, a long concatenation of causes, which may, and often does, ultimately effectuate a disgraceful and untimely end. It deprives the child of those who would not only provide for all its natural wants, but also would see that it had the proper education and faithful training which would enable it to provide for itself and to sail clear of the many rocks upon which so many noble vessels have already been dashed to pieces. The child will be a scourge to society in becoming a criminal, and will be goaded to criminality by the cruel force of lawless necessity, and stumble upon it in the darkness of ignorance, until the ultimate effect of the murderer's crime against the child be seen in the fate of the child itself, while expiating its own crimes in shame, bitterness and death.

Relatives and friends are also grievously sinned against in murder. A sister is deprived of a brother who would prove to her a second father—would watch her steps with faithful vigilance, and defend her against wrong and shame—would shield her in the hour of trial, need and difficulty. A brother may often be a sister's only earthly stay, and the hand that robs her of such, could not do her a greater wrong. Friends, however few or numerous, are grossly injured by the murder of one of their number. It very frequently happens, that the welfare of many is involved in the life and prospects of one. We are all less or more dependent upon one another, but in the close relationship of friends, this dependence is more vividly felt and acknowledged. A man in an extensive business must have many friends or acquaintances whose rights, property and prospects are involved in some way in such business. Keeping the outrage done the friendship and love of such by murder out of view, this crime committed against one of them, not only injures the whole but also is sure to ruin some—at least all who immediately depend upon him. The larger the circle of friends is, and the more numerous the dependents are, the further does the injurious wave of murder roll. Onward does it take its way, until it spends itself far out on the bosom of society, leaving many a plan frustrated and hope destroyed, carrying far away on its bloody crest the comfort, fortune and independence of many, whom the murderer had no idea of injuring when he struck the blow. This crime cannot confine its injuries to the individual—it sins in one moment against every relation in life. The closer and tenderer the relation, the keener and more poignant are its effects felt. The criminal himself cannot escape—he sins against himself, his family and friends. He commits a kind of suicide in that he renders himself voluntarily amenable by his crime to the laws of his country, the penalty of which is death. His parents, his own family, relations and friends, although innocent, are not only forced to be partakers of his shame, but are also called upon to mourn his loss. He who kills himself, makes his wife a widow, his children orphans, drags his parents down in sorrow to dishonorable graves, and covers his friends, acquaintances and relatives with mortal shame. His crime fearfully recoils upon himself and all connected with him. It is the same with the suicide. He does to himself what the assassin does to another. His crime is at once a foul murder, and irreparable disgrace not only upon his own memory, but also upon those he leaves behind to suffer its bitterness. He also makes his wife a widow, his children orphans, and cruelly covers parents, relatives and friends with undeserved shame and grief, and not unfrequently plunges them into the wildest confusion and ruin. But worst of all, he launches himself into the dread mystery of eternity, while God and His ministers of vengeance are witnessing the crime which will hurl him to despair.

But what a crime does the murderer commit against the murdered one? Who can count the loss? A man in full health, enjoying each pleasure of life, his heart fixed upon the world, basking in the smiles of an affectionate wife and children, in pleasant communion with friends; to such a man sudden death must be bitter beyond conception. A dreadful pang must shoot through the soul when everything which he holds dear on earth is suddenly shut out from his eye—when all passes away from him as if it were struck into oblivion by a sure and sudden thunderbolt. What astonishment, agony and frenzy must seize upon the soul, and what a trial of horror must it experience, on being hurried so unceremoniously into eternity? But this is as nothing to what follows. In most cases the victim of murder falls dead without having time to breathe a single prayer to heaven—to collect his thoughts or utter one cry for mercy. The lips become as still as marble ere the knife is fully sheathed in the heart. The soul takes its awful flight unprepared. Oh God, what dread, what stunning, stifling amazement afflicts the spirit at the bare idea of being dragged before the judgment seat of an offended God, while it is in the very zenith of impenitence, without a moment's warning or preparation—while in the very pride of life which excludes God and eternity from the mind. The trembling and unprepared soul can alone appreciate such a dreadful situation. It hears the judgment uttered which dooms it to eternal woe, and as it shrinks back from the angry gaze of its God and Creator, its piercing wail, its wild cry of despair, and its frantic lamentations tell the enormity of that crime which the murderer has committed. It is an awful thing even to suspect that the hand of the murderer has plunged thousands of immortal spirits into the bitterest torments of hell, one of which a million of worlds, with all their pomps and honors, with all their wealth and hidden treasures could not purchase. These are but a few of the consequences of murder.

We will now say a few words with respect to the things which lead to this crime, and which are therefore forbidden in this commandment.

All the inordinate passions of the mind tend to its commission. The desire of revenge, the malignity of hatred, the promptings of ill-will and jealousy, the fire of envy and the heat of temper are all fathers to this fearful crime. The demon of revenge stirs up the soul into a blind fury, and goads the mad avenger with taunts and lying reproaches to seek his victim's blood. The madness of hate overturns reason and sours the milk of humanity. A man completely under its influence is less placable than the tiger whose drink is blood. Anger is a fiend inhabiting the breast, which points to death and destruction—which transforms a reasonable being into a foaming maniac who thirsts after blood. We are, my brethren, to overcome all the passions, to chain down these unruly demons of the bosom, for they are the prolific parents of murder. We are to avoid giving offence

and the infliction of injury; we are neither to quarrel with, nor speak evil of our neighbors, for these things provoke murder. We are to abstain from every criminal intoxication and passionate excitement, such as drinking and gambling, for they are frequently the cause of murder. We are to shun all men and their haunts, who are given to these excitements, and who are ready to receive provocation and act under it. We are also to abandon the habit of having arms upon our persons, lest we be tempted to use them while agitated by passion. There is, my brethren, a great deal included in the foregoing few words.

But as it is an especial duty of God's minister to attack every prevalent vice which he sees in the community, we must now turn to ourselves and see how often and fearfully the command under consideration is broken.

The carrying of concealed weapons being a temptation to murder, it is certainly forbidden. How is it here? A man really thinks himself unfashionable if he have not his revolver or a gleaming bowie-knife peeping out from his belt. In fact, as a general thing, a man thinks he cannot sleep comfortably without a pistol or knife being under his pillow. There is no use contradicting this—it is an ominous fact. An exchange of shots is only a fashionable recreation; a thrust or two with the knife only a trifle. A murder is only KILLING A MAN, and that is no great matter. May I ask why is this so? Are men necessitated to carry arms, and if so, why? Simply because at this moment we are acting in the face of the world the part of revolted slaves. We have learned to look upon murder with the utmost temper and complacency, and God and man can seek no stronger testimony to the awful fact that this dreadful crime is the fruit of our having cast the laws of heaven and earth aside. Once upon a time we would tremble from head to foot at a tale of blood; but what has changed our sentiments? Is it not that we have become familiar with blood? If not, can it be in consequence of our GREAT PROGRESS in what we proudly call enlightenment and morality, or in consequence of having gloriously emancipated ourselves from the thralldom of the healthy rules of good society? We hear men, as if the mantle of prophecy had fallen upon them, predicting splendid destinies for this State. False prophets, ye have a more unworthy mistress than Jezebel; your God is as ungenerous as Baal, but your sacrifices are much cheaper. You would barter a few empty puffs to stimulate the vanity of the people for their gold, while you would hide their duty from them for fear of their anger. Let a people become religious and we may safely leave their destinies in the hands of God—these are predicted already. Vain flattery is unnecessary. But let such a crime as murder stain the people as a people, then no flattery can avert the revealed judgments which will overthrow them. Prophets or no prophets, they must come if God be true.

Murder could not possibly become so horribly frequent or so shockingly wanton amongst us, unless we had sunk beforehand into the dregs of vice. Murder comes not to be a trifle in a moment. It is the result of long and habitual depravity. Men's minds must be long schooled to turpitude—all other crimes must pall upon the human passions ere murder can stalk shamelessly abroad. All the minor horrors of which man can be guilty, must become habits before murder begins to afflict a people or become one of its characteristics. I have heard men, even while standing with them on the fatal scaffold, make speeches to justify murder. They actually boasted that their education taught them never to receive an insult without resenting it—with what?—with death. Where could these men of the bloody hand have received such a high-toned education? Can it be possible that this country can boast of such teachings? If so, may God, His angels and ministers of grace defend us. Yet I fear it is so. California, no doubt, has the credit of broaching this new philosophy. This MORAL FLOWER is indigenous to her soil. No one denies that this country is ENLIGHTENED and CHRISTIAN. But how can we account for her long list of murders which is a terrible witness to her having run through every gradation of vice, and to her having at length FULLY CONSUMMATED it. Her star probably is rising and setting from day to day in the "sign of the scorpion." Why, there is scarcely a day that passes but we are regaled with details of two or three murders. It does seem, then, that the schoolmaster who taught the murder preacher, is abroad. To certify yourselves of this, you have only to look at the public prints besprinkled with the record of foul assassinations. Only a few months ago, even here, in the jail of this mountain village, no less than five murderers were confined, two of whom sleep in the murderer's grave in close vicinity to the scene of their mortal disgrace. Not only this village, but every village, town and city has its long list of murders and executions. What bright and glorious destiny can come out of this? A man grows sick while contemplating the insensibility of the public to such an array of horrors. A patriot once told his relentless judge, that if all the innocent blood which that judge had shed could be collected in one place, his lordship could swim in it. But if all the innocent blood with which the land of California is drunk (THIS LAND OF BRIGHT DESTINIES), could be collected into one place, gun-boats could engage it it, nay drown in it. This certainly promises great destinies. It is not alone the white man's blood which cries against us, but the blood of the rude and defenseless Indian shrieks out for retribution, and it will come in some silent watch of the night. Innocent blood has sprinkled the land like the dews of heaven. Thousands of mothers have wept bitterly for the fate of their children in this land of blood. Thousands of fathers, wives, sisters and brothers, are now weeping in the solitude of broken hearts, for

loved ones who sleep in the grave of the murdered or the murderer, or who are wrapt in the winding sheet of the demented suicide. Let the stranger come here, and he will ask—why these pistols? why these knives? wherefore these insignia of murder? He will ask why this continual drunkenness and open gambling? Why this total neglect of religion, shameless immorality, Sunday desecration, robbing, plundering, cheating, swindling? Why this display of false independence, this disrespect for the very decencies of life, these inordinate passions, quarrels and riots? Why is man so completely changed? What, think you, would be the answer? “OH THIS IS A NEW COUNTRY—THINGS ARE NOT SETTLED YET!” It is quite in keeping that California, “this *new* country,” should have her *new* ethics as well as her *new* philosophy. Here you may see that the schoolmaster is abroad again. Because the country is new, these things must be expected; because things are not settled, men must become intellectual savages. It is indeed a new country, if crime can make it new. It is settled by men from old countries, and these men were once Christians. Things are unsettled because men have become apostates to the Christian religion; and the country, in this sense, will ever remain new, and things will ever remain unsettled until men renew their Christianity.

The following statement, although it will not add to our high opinion of ourselves, may yet become a ground of serious thought to those who are fond of rough-shod truth. There is no other Christian country on the face of the earth where murdering ruffianism is so complacently tolerated; where open drunkenness and profanity are so shameless; where wholesale rascality, plundering and fraud so abundantly flourish. I confess this is somewhat strong language, but when the truth, *THE WHOLE TRUTH*, and nothing but the truth is to be told of this country, a man need not be too fastidious as to his dialectics—he need not fear that he offends God however much he may offend man, by telling the truth to the best of his ability.

To conclude. The law before us bids us not to do and to do. What, then, are we to do? We must do what follows, then the country will be old—things will be settled. Instead of murdering, hating and wronging each other, we are to do all in our power to preserve the lives of our neighbors, and to assist in making such pleasant and happy to them. We are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and sustain the friendless. We are to forgive all injury received and to make all the reparation we can for injury given. We are to avoid quarrels ourselves and endeavor to mend them with others, silence the tongue of evil report, to heal disputes and differences. We are to live in charity, honesty, good-will and peace with all men, so far as in us lies, and we are to strengthen the bonds of peace and love by respecting religion and by practising its precepts.

SERMON X.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

TEXT—Exodus xx, 14: “*Thou shalt not commit Adultery.*”

It is the duty of the preacher to declare the whole counsel of God, though in that counsel there may be some things, which, according to the notions of the too fastidious, should not be treated of boldly and openly. The prophet is at once the organ and guardian of true delicacy, and Christians need, by no means, be ashamed of its manner of teaching it. The preacher, before he can acquit himself of his whole duty, must often lay himself open to the sneer of the cynic. He must have an eye to true delicacy, although he may offend its tiresome and petty counterfeits. We admit that refined, educated feelings are realities. There is pure coin, but what is called fashionable delicacy is only the outside imitation. It is not a mere adulteration, but a base counterfeit. For such we have no respect. Truth being dearer than all other considerations, we will speak it for the same reason that the Reformer did—because “it is the rod of right, and therefore cannot be a legitimate ground of scandal or offense.”

Adultery, the thing expressly prohibited, is what is called “A VIOLATION OF THE MARRIAGE BED,” either by husband or wife. The word is often employed in Scripture, to signify the sin of idolatry or any uncleanness which would run counter to the virtues of chastity or continence. It is also used, in ecclesiastical language, to express the crime of invading the functions of a Bishop without due and visible ordination and authority thereto. With adultery, in these senses, we have nothing to do at present. We speak of adultery proper which is here expressly prohibited, and the principal pollutions which are indications thereof, and which are forbidden in the law by implication.

The thing itself may be committed in two ways: 1st. When the man or the woman separates without a just cause, and marries again. 2d. When either is false to the other, although continuing in the conjugal state.

But hear the sensualist speak. It is a scriptural sentiment, “that it is better not to marry than to marry.” This being an apostolical precept, it

cannot conflict with the original commandment, "multiply and replenish." But this law cannot be obeyed without sexual commerce, and the unmarried state being better than the married, there of course cannot be any unlawful intercourse. There can be no such thing as fornication. We are warned against the state of matrimony, yet commanded "to multiply and replenish." If the original law gives way to the apostolical teachings, and if the law with respect to unlawful intercourse be in force, then the extinction of the race is intended—which thing belies nature. If the original law holds good, and if the apostolical teaching be correct, then indeed indiscriminate intercourse is justifiable, because the race must be continued and because it is better "not to marry than to marry." St. Paul was no stupid bungler. God and his Apostle are perfectly reconciled. The Apostle in his epistle, addresses particular men in peculiar circumstances, under which it would not be expedient for them to marry, yet it would be better for such men to "marry than to burn." To such men alone does the Apostle address himself. He gives them a particular rule for their peculiar case. He says that "marriage is honorable," *i. e.*, it is honorable to all men, because it is a holy institution. But in order that all the duties which the estate implies may be duly discharged, a man in peculiar circumstances is to consult EXPEDIENCY, since he is free to marry or not to marry.

A man may be so circumstanced as that he could neither support a wife nor family as they should be; in such a case, it would be better for him not to marry. In such a case the dictate of the law must supersede that of expediency. A man may have special duties in life to discharge, but which the duties of the married state would render difficult. It is not EXPEDIENT for such a man to marry, though it is lawful. What St. Paul means, is simply this: that it is better or more expedient for some men, in some circumstances, not to marry than to marry, but that it is better for all men, under all circumstances, to marry than to burn. The saying of the Apostle is only prudential, not doctrinal.

I have no space here to lay before you the many blessings of this sacred institution in which the wisdom of the Supreme Ruler is seen, and in which His care for the well-being of man is discovered to us. We must confine ourselves to the crime mentioned in the commandment, and to its consequences. We are told that the man who lusteth after a woman, commits adultery in the sight of God. We see, then, that whatever approaches to the thing itself, God identifies with it.

Fornication is then forbidden. Its condemnation is the same as that of adultery; their tendency and intention are the same; they spring from the self-same reservoir of evil; they are the offspring of the same abandoned heart, and the deeds of the self-same cruel and disgusting passion. The same array of brutal appetites are exposed in one as in the other. Their

trade is the same, to procure seduction and the overthrow of innocence. Fornication carries the firebrand into the home of purity and innocence, and not only wrecks the happiness of its victim, but also that of her parents and relatives. We shall see some of the consequences of fornication when we are considering those of adultery.

Incest is an adultery, therefore forbidden. This crime outrages all decency—it is the desire of nature become thoroughly morbid. God is astonished at it, and angels and men view it with shame. The marriage and intercourse of near relations have been denounced from the very creation as being repugnant to nature herself.

Sodomy is an adultery. Of all abominations, this is the prince. All the abominations of hell could not drag any human being to a lower depth of degradation than does this sin. The thick darkness of the bottomless pit should hide it from the sight of heaven; the black waters of a poisonous Dead sea should cover it from the earth. The fiercest and swiftest bolts of heaven struck its temples into ruins, and opened one common grave for its perpetrators in the burning bowels of the earth. God endowed two merciless elements with the instinct of revenge against it—fire and flood became His ministers of destruction, until there was no vestige of the cities of the plain left. Their doom ascended to heaven on the gloomy cloud of smoke, and the earth has an awful memento of it in the sullen wave of the Dead sea.

Bestiality is an adultery. Let the brutality of this sin pass; it is not for human ears to hear, nor for human lips to utter. Let fiends revel in the imagination of it, but let man blush at its very name and flee with haste from its contemplation. Though the earth is now and again thereby polluted—though man is sometimes smitten by it as with the living sores of the destroying plague, yet let its name be whispered only in the dark places of the earth; let the “damned goblin” be bidden hence, else nature’s throne will be shaken into ruins, and God Himself will become utterly ashamed of His handiwork.

Polygamy is an adultery. Although it was winked at in the olden time by God, on account of man’s hardness of heart and ignorance, it is yet an intrenchment upon the first law with respect to marriage. It is subversive of the best interests of society, in exactly the same way as adultery is. It is fatal to purity, female virtue, morality, lawful pro-creation, affection for wife and children, and to all kindly feeling. It is the cause of endless jealousies, quarrels, recriminations, strifes and hatings. It scatters to the winds the ends and objects of holy matrimony, and throws the bridle loose upon the neck of the strongest of all human passions, thereby assailing society at its most vulnerable part, reducing it to confusion and anarchy.

Whatever act of incontinence we commit, whether in thought, word or

deed, the same is an adultery in the sight of God. All our sensual longings and desires, our fostering the libidinous pictures of the unchaste imagination, the midnight sigh for salacious pleasure and gratification, the day-dreams of the lecherous and abandoned libertine, that sparkling eye of passion which is more eloquent than the unbridled tongue, the prowlings of the midnight wanderer about the house of the STRANGE WOMAN, all the "evil communications which corrupt good manners," all lewd words which are the mutterings of the voluptuous heart—many of those idle flirtations and captivating attentions which are too often mistaken for cultivated manners and good breeding—all the bold and inviting behavior, especially of females, which fashion may permit, but which impure desire dictates—many of those soft, delicate, but fantastical dresses which rustle for the carnal ear and float for the carnal eye—all the soft and studied words of the seducer poured into the ear of unsuspecting innocence—the polished riot of the festal company, where beauty and wit may kiss each other; where the brow of innocence is often shorn of its glory; where the passions are pampered and the watch-dogs set soundly to sleep—where hand joins hand, look meets look, trembling and flashing with the electricity of an impure love—all the haunts of passionate pleasure where the sons and daughters of enjoyment cast away shame, delicacy and prudence—all the seductive exercises which heat the blood by arousing the passions, fever the brain with new and strange delights, thrill the heart with the sweet pangs of a bewildered pleasure—all great feasting, and deep drinking, and voluptuous living—all, all these are forbidden, because they are incitements and temptations to adultery; because they leave virtue and chastity at the mercy of the heartless and unworthy conqueror; because they are the precursors, companions and handmaids of this dreadful crime. They are adultery herself, not, indeed, as she stands exposed and naked, but as she sits at the gate in scented and costly drapery, telling her victims of all the pleasures of her house.

The first aggravation of adultery is, that it renders man an enemy to God. This probably may be no startling announcement to the base seducer of wedded virtue. The man who will trample under his feet the flowers of innocence and remorselessly defile the marriage bed, may not believe the faithful threatenings of his God, but if the king of torments be execrated by God, by angels and men, for his seduction of our first parents—if no language can describe the vengeance that will overtake him for this crime—the adulterer should tremble because God threatens.

Adultery disorganizes society sooner than any other crime, by the overthrow of female character. Let us view it through the female offender. By it, pro-creation becomes stunted and unhealthy. A weak, diseased, illegitimate and spurious offspring affects and disgusts the parent. Delicacy,

the proudest ornament of woman, is completely dimmed; chastity, the only crown of woman, is dashed rudely from her head, and she is driven upon the wide sea of life, a smitten and dismantled wreck. Shame is banished from her cheek, and from under those lips which once blossomed as the roses of Sharon, comes the breath of a poison a hundred fold more fatal than the dreaded sirocco of Syria. Everything that adorns woman, wilts away at the touch of this fiend. She who could a little while ago frown down the impertinent glance of the libertine, now courts it with greediness. She who but a moment ago could look her husband in the face with conscious rectitude and the pride of virtue, and upon her children without the agony that attends immeasurable degradation, is now lashed with a scourge of scorpions, an unpitied victim to irremediable reproach. What was only a moment ago a proud edifice of virtue and chastity, is now a Babel of corrupted ruins, blackened and blasted by the darkest treachery and the deepest guilt. Oh, how truly hath the virtue of women been compared to the delicate down of the butterfly's wing, which the slightest touch will displace, and once displaced, will never, never again return. Woman is the light of society; she it is who refines it and preserves it. She is the same to it as that principle is to wine, which preserves its flavor. But let her fall, and she drags society along with her in her fearful descent. It only requires the prostitution of female virtue to consummate human degradation—thoroughly and universally taint the fairest part of God's creation with a corruption which must end only in feeding upon itself until it die. It only requires the destruction of female character, to render the curse hanging over man still more cursed, and the dark night of his sorrows still darker.

Prostitution or adultery in the male is only a little less prolific of evils than the same in the female. When the wife discovers her husband to be guilty of this crime, she becomes gloomy, fretful and resentful. She will grieve over her lot in silence, and curse the hour that bound her to such a heartless traitor. She will regret that such a man is the father of her children, and she will begin to hate her children because they have such a father. She feels the delicacy of her sex wantonly outraged, and her honor, both as a woman and wife, brutally assailed. The man to whom she plighted her love and faith becomes the object of her disrespect, nay, of her hate. The home which should be the sweet asylum of peace, is taken possession of by a legion of unclean spirits. Where smiles should be, there are tears, frowns and vituperations. Where love should dwell, there are hate and revenge. She who would be dutiful, becomes an apostate to all honor and duty. If she will not accomplish some sweet revenge by a deed of blood, she will be sure to find means wherein to drown her grief by adding shame to shame; driven to adultery herself, she will resort to the usual mournful

expedients by which the guilty think to blunt the sting of ignominy, until she will drink the very dregs of vice. If not, the least that can happen is, that she will make her hearth the theater of endless quarrels and recriminations, and call up storm after storm, until the traitor finds it expedient to look up more congenial company. He will go down to the haunts of the drunkard, where he can purchase a short respite from angry contention, and a short forgetfulness of his own turpitude and misery, in the insanity of intoxication. He will fly to the gambling table to purchase, at the last expense of reputation and fortune, a short lived antidote for the bitterness of his soul in the wild excitement of the game. Irregular habits come on apace; the passions are strengthened and rendered more imperious, as the calls of duty fall more faintly and confusedly on the ear of the maddened spirit. Idleness, the parent of countless evils, and carelessness, its faithful handmaid, lead him away captive, until his former self is completely changed into a miracle of all that is horrible in crime and fearful in cruelty. Having lost the esteem of his friends, he at length loses all respect for himself—a feeling which no excitement can fully obliterate, the pain of which no intoxication can alleviate. We commenced with adultery, which is itself deep down in the abyss of vice, and has been swept downwards to its last goal by such deep plunges as can be taken by him alone who fearlessly struck out on his downward way by adultery. He receives the burial of an ass, and his name, if ever mentioned at all, is so in connection with deeds of darkness and shame. Would that his works could follow him to his obscure grave, and be buried there. He leaves behind him, as a cursed legacy to society, a family beggared in everything but crime—a progeny of lawless and uneducated vagabonds who will continue to be thorns in the side of society, and arrows of death to their kindred as long as they live. He bequeaths to a wife, if she have the great misfortune to survive him, the accumulated dishonors of years spent in depravity, with which herself may have become so infected, that she will be a stigma upon her womanhood and a stain upon her sex. At all events, her portion will be a broken heart, and her end an unwept death—the most torturing and lingering kind of murder.

If woman would only preserve her chastity—if she could only educate her passions so as to subserve her own honor and the honor of society in hers, the male seducer would be completely at fault, and his inglorious victories could no longer crown the brows of the most beautiful of God's creation, with the dark leaves of the cypress, nor place in her fair hand the tarnished sceptre of the wanton.

Adultery involves perjury. By it the most sacred vows and solemn oaths are shamefully violated. Vows that have been uttered in the hearing of the Most High God, and sanctioned by a spiritual and mysterious religion;

plighted at the holy altars of Jehovah, while heaven stood listening; witnessed by the Holy Spirit, the angels, the ministers and stewards of heaven's mysteries; registered in the imperishable records of heaven—these vows and solemn promises are broken and forgotten when this crime is accomplished. It would be supposed that the fear of equivocating with God would make the married offender pause, ere taking the final plunge; that the remembrance of vows made while the heart was warm, the affections undivided and the soul pure, would restrain the outgoings of unlawful passion in one who can well appreciate treachery to the married state. It would be supposed that the terrors of perjury, the threatenings of an angry God and the frowns of society, would make the married offender assume virtue, even while adultery had possession of the heart. But when neither the threats of God against perjury, nor the gushing recollections of a first love, nor the frown of the good can raise an impassable barrier against this crime, we cannot expect that vows or solemn promises will remain long unfaded in the memory, while the heart is burning and the brain is in a flame. Aside altogether from the indelible marks and titles of infamy and shame which adultery entails upon the offender—aside altogether from the long train of ruin and unhappiness which follows this crime—aside altogether from the ridiculous position in which it places husband or wife, children and relations, it would be reasonable to suppose that one's plighted faith would stand in the way of the criminal, like an enraged angel swinging a two-edged and flaming sword. Treachery and perjury are, indeed, fit companions to attend upon adultery. As the crime itself is the most productive of fearful consequences, the perjury involved is a breach of the most sacred promise, of the tenderest trust, and the treachery involved is a violation of the nicest and most delicate honor. Let him who engages in the seduction or in the solicitation of the married woman's chastity, not suppose that he is free from this perjury and treachery. Let him not seek the victory without first casting his eye upon his compeer—the arch-fiend. Come forward thou human fiend, that the curses of husband, father and children, which utter the judgments of heaven, earth and hell against you, may hurry you, as on the wings of the wind, to your doom. Stand forth thou systematic destroyer of social living, in the light of the sun, that society with one accord may hurl you into a night dark enough to hide your impurity and perfidy from the earth. You are the perpetrator of many crimes in one. You are the violator of what ought to be, even in the estimation of a demon like yourself, inviolable. You are the kindler of family discord, the fatal rock upon which innocence is shipwrecked, the destroyer of a husband's honor, a father's pride and the child's hope. Whether your victim be married or unmarried, your crime is the same. You transform the timidity of woman into the prudery and boldness of the harlot, her

scrupulous delicacy and modesty into the disgusting effrontery of the wanton. You make her commit a crime for which neither yourself nor mankind will ever forgive her. You leave her no room for expiation. She may weep, but cannot burnish away the taint you have put upon her honor. You will only mock her tears with an impure sympathy, and make light of her irremediable calamity. If your victim be unmarried, you strike parents, brothers and sisters with consternation—you transfix their hearts with a thousand daggers. You transform unsuspecting innocence to folly and depravity. You feast upon the poor man's only lamb, which he nursed so tenderly in his bosom, while you were rich enough to purchase one of your own. You give those who never injured you in any way, to the bitterness of reproach—you repay their kindness and confidence with the most withering treachery. You make men begin to suspect that there is not such a thing at all as female purity. Oh! where is your pity? where your shame? Did the fiend who came reeking from hell to the paradise of earth, accomplish more than you? Behold your work in those public houses of prostitution which are inhabited with women, who were happy, innocent and respected, until they became your victims. Let the sight unnerve your unclean heart—let the scene strike terror into your inmost soul. Remember that each woman there had a tender mother and kind father; that she was nursed in love, reared with care, and that she was once one of a happy family, until you tore her from their bosom. Ask your impure heart what has become of that mother and father now? See how that family mourns for the exile of shame, who is living, yet dead—who is lost, yet can never be found. You led her away captive, and when you grew weary of her faded charms, you cast her into the house of death. Look at her in that house; see how the fire of crime has put the fever spot upon her cheek. Hear the loud laugh, which bespeaks a withered and ravished heart—an index to extinguished hopes. It is more mournful than the wail of inward agony, and more startling than the cry of despair. Think not that as she whirls round and round in the maelstrom of shame, she can find no hour of sad remembrance. Think not that visions of father and mother, of brother and sister, of home and innocence, do not people these sad and torturing moments. They must come up before her like accusing spirits, making her weep tears which are the scorn of men—making her a victim to a grief which only can be understood at the throne of God. Be not deceived; she is a woman of unwitnessed sorrow, and that sorrow is of your making. Her rounds of fatal pleasure blunt not the sting nor soothe the torturing wound, though they may cover her undying sorrow from him, in whose heart there is no room for remorse or pity. Seducer and libertine, witness in the prostitute the wreck of woman which you have made. Is there not something in it which makes even your own guilty soul recoil

back upon itself, and to tremble with prophetic misgivings? You were the locust that preceded the palmer worm, and the palmer worm having come, leaves nothing of the decayed fruit to the canker worm, but an unsightly mass of corruption. To you alone society is obliged for these establishments of prostitution which insult the majesty of heaven and the purity of a Christian people. You bring the daughters of Magdalen from afar, to satiate the passions of the impure and incontinent. You rear fortresses of shame in our very midst, that our sons may be ensnared and our wives and daughters outraged. When you have secured female degradation, you have secured the male's, inasmuch as you supply the means whereby men may become shameless prostitutes. You have taught woman in the school of abomination and debauchery to hire herself out to man, and thereby you teach men to bid upon her. You are the nursing father, the detestable parent of that infamy which has turned a thousand families into worse than putrefaction. You are a curse and a scourge to society, for you plant the seeds of its dissolution in its very midst. You build houses of death that men and women may taste of corruption. Your work is a public disgrace, in that you open dens of iniquity to our sons and daughters. You open the path of perdition to thousands who never knew you, and who never injured you. Oh, what a Babel of ruins you will have to build up at the last day; seduced women, public prostitution with its widely felt evils, will come up before you to scorch your undone soul with eternal woe. In that day, Phineas, the son of Eleazar, will thrust you through and through, because you brought a plague upon his brethren. The God of heaven will pay you with the price of a dog. Your voluptuous heart, which was the temple of passion, will then become the temple of eternal anguish.

Your crime goes somewhat further. It robs the Saviour of mankind of the souls He redeemed with his priceless blood. It gives the rightful heritage of heaven's King to reproach and shame. It makes the offices of the Holy Spirit of non-effect. It despoils the Church of her children, and paralyzes her efforts, sending her out to the wilderness to weep like Hagar of old. It is subversive of all salvation and all hope, for while the solemn fast is proclaimed—while the holy convocation is assembled—while the prayers of a people are poured fourth—while the priests are standing between the porch and the altar, weeping and saying "Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach," the monuments of a people's shame, the foundation of which you laid in the seduction of woman, bear witness against their weeping and prayers. They do not reach the throne of God. Seducer and libertine, what say you to all this? Do not blame her who is your victim. She was only an instrument in your hands to work out these dreadful evils. In God's sight, she may yet be able to ex-

piate her guilt, though never in man's. She is oftener sinned against and oftener sinned with, than she sins. Man forgives her not for this, but God will. Man forgives you without even your repentance, but God, before He can forgive you, must see you in sackcloth and ashes until your dying day.

These, my brethren, are but a few of the consequences of fornication and ordinary seduction. In the following sermon, we will pursue the remaining consequences of adultery.

SERMON XI.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.—(CONTINUED.)

TEXT—Exodus xx, 14: "*Thou shalt not commit Adultery.*"

IN our last sermon we closed with glancing at some of the consequences of fornication. Of course the same, in all their fullness, may be assigned to adultery also.

We proceed to notice the principal aggravations of the crime forbidden in the law, and premise, before doing so, that, unlike other crimes, there is no reason whatever for mitigation or justification. The passion that actuates the adulterer is perfectly under his control, so that we must ascribe the commission of this crime, not to the irresistible force of passion, but to the most wanton malignity—to all that can be abominable in the heart of man.

Adultery destroys all the tenderest and closest relations of life. Other crimes are sometimes productive of good by a kind of mistake, but this one never. Whenever it appears, its ravages bring about invariably the same specific results—the destruction of all that is good, great and happy in society. It sunders effectually what God has joined irrevocably and mysteriously together, warring continually with the declared purposes and providences of Jehovah.

When the husband detects the infidelity of the wife, he feels as if an impassable gulf were instantaneously struck open at his feet by the convul-

sion of a mighty earthquake. In one moment of consternation and despair, he beholds his companion on one side of this yawning chasm and himself on the other, doomed to an eternal separation. What words can picture the disappointment of such an one? Where is the eloquence that can fully convey to us the feelings of the man whose honor is thus rudely assailed? The crime at once deprives him of his wife, and it is only an accident if it do not deprive him of his children also. The questions will spontaneously come up to him, Are these little ones mine? are they the progeny of adultery? Suspicion after suspicion will seize upon him, until the torturing conviction that he is a widowed husband and a childless parent, crush him into the dust. The children, indeed, may be his, but who can convince him? They, indeed, may be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, but what can procure to them again the affections of a ruined father? Death's robbery is honorable—the sleep of the grave is sweet and peaceful—there is a soothing balm which sustains the soul even while death is busy with our dearest and nearest. Though from the bourne of death no traveler returns, yet the soul fastens upon the hope that the departed are not lost to us forever. But the death of adultery—the separation consummated by shame and perfidy, is the very tomb of hope—'tis the night of despair. It transforms the objects of our confidence, our natural affection and solicitation, into those of our contempt, shame and grief. Our wishes and prayers are that they should hide themselves from us in some far off desolation of the earth. Our happiness will depend upon the oblivion of forgetfulness, yet we cannot cease to *FEEL*, while they live, nor to *REMEMBER*, until we enter into the mystery of eternity—perhaps not even then. When death deprives a husband of his wife, he certainly feels the wound, but time, the common cure, soon soothes and heals it. Her spirit of love will dwell in the memory. But when she falls into the jaws of adultery, then all is lost—the gulf is impassable. She lives or dies only to people his memory with the most agonizing recollections, and with the most withering reproach. The wound inflicted is incurable; time will bring with it no oblivion, and years no assuaging antidote. The grave itself can scarcely shroud the shame that crushed the soul with an impenetrable gloom. That all this might happen from adultery, men will admit—that it does and will happen, they may say is only a bare possibility. But that it has happened, a thousand sad and horrible examples in the history of mankind evidently prove, and that it will happen again is clear, from the fact that the same cause under the same circumstances will inevitably produce the same results.

We have witnessed the grief of a father, as he stood by the new-made grave of his child. 'Tis a trying, mournful sight. We have heard the struggle of anguish sound in his bosom as the unconquerable sob would be

bursting forth. We have seen him half ashamed to allow the flood-gates of his sorrow to open, as if the sternness of manhood would thereby be dishonored. We have seen him tremble with the agitation and keenness of his grief, as sod after sod was placed upon the breast of his darling. We have seen the strong man bow low like the smitten bulrush, as he turned away to leave the fruit of his loins to the worm and corruption. We have seen him wander from room to room, seeking no consolation in the dark hour of bereavement but that of solitude and tears. We have seen him in the dead watches of the night, while the moon rode high and her holy face shone bright, wander to the grave of the absent one, and there lay prostrate and pour forth the grief of an overcharged soul. Aye, we have seen him there when he thought that none witnessed, but his God and the spirits of the dead. There was the grief of a strong man—it was at once the inscrutable affection and unostentatious sorrow of a father for the child. But what is all this grief to that stunning shock which the parent receives, when, in his inmost soul, a fiend whispers to him that his little ones are the offspring of shame—that they are the fruits of adultery? At one merciless stroke, he is deprived of all he held dear upon this earth—all, indeed, that a man can prize in this world of uncertainty and vicissitude. To be robbed in this manner of wife, is indeed cruel; but to be of children, is the last and most fatal shaft of human wo. Those little ones who were to cheer his tottering steps, as he would be descending to the bourne of all flesh, and who were to close his eyes on all the objects of this world—who were to be the light of his age and the brightness of his hearth, are they, then, to be living monuments to his dishonor? For whom then did he toil—for whom did he, year after year, brave the storms of life and endure its endless toils and weariness? On whom did he lavish love, affection, care, labor and money? Whence now can he look for his ravished honor, joy and happiness? Who are these that he nursed, clothed and fed? The answers vibrate through his crushed soul, repeating continually to him that they are the children of the adulterer, and that all his love, labor and hope are an unmitigated desolation. The cup of bliss is instantly dashed from his expecting lips—the sweets of life are all destroyed, and the cup of bitterness is filled to overflowing. No more can he indulge in the fond and bland illusions of this world's hope, for the fountains of his happiness are dried up, and all within him and around him are clothed in the gloom of a winter which can only be relieved, now and again, by a transitory gleam of hope from the tomb. The results of adultery, in this respect, may be compared to an untimely and violent death, which turns all the fairest prospects and scenes of life into a desert waste, smitten by each adverse blast of despair. The ends of it to the husband and father, are blasted happiness and extinguished hopes; to wife and mother, everlasting shame, bitter remorse,

and ever flowing tears ; and to children, its fruits are cruelty, misfortune, and a kind of orphanage.

Adultery not only does away with whatever marriage secures to the wedded couple, but also with the sweet relation which exists between parent and child. It is thoroughly subversive of all the true affections and desirable feelings which this relation implies. Not only does it quench all conjugal love, respect and esteem, but also filial duty, honor and obedience. Not only does it warm the viper of discontent and bitterness between man and wife, but it also substitutes hate for love in the breast of the child. It also quenches fraternal affection, and puts an end to the amity and social intercourse which should exist between relatives. For whenever adultery is in the ascendancy, there cannot be, in the very nature of things, certain and acknowledged relationships, and when these are destroyed, the duties implied in them are also gone. Children of the same mother may have many fathers ; their brothers, sisters and relatives may be members of many households ; their blood mingling with many families who are strangers to them. On whom is the child of shame to confer his filial love and obedience ? Adultery puts him in a wilderness, where he dwells alone, with the perfidy of his mother resting upon him like the curse of heaven. He is deprived of all those objects without which the human heart becomes barren. To have no one to love, is more dreary than to dwell amid the snow-drifts of the pole. To have none to call by the affectionate name of father, sister or brother, is ten-fold more desolate than an habitation among the tombs. The orphan can recall, amid the trials of life, all the sweet memories of his parents, but the offspring of shame has no such recollections to comfort him. He would rather forget that he was born of woman, and would pray that his life might be blotted out in the eternal oblivion of annihilation. He knows none to love—he can have none to love—he will, therefore, have many to hate, among whom will be the mother who gave him her shame as an heritage. Thus does adultery burst asunder all the tender and social bands of society, as the waters of the melting mountains burst open the yielding ice on the bosom of the frozen river.

Adultery is frequently the cause of the foulest assassinations and the most horrid murders. The man whose honor and happiness are destroyed by this crime, will, in all probability, be actuated through life with an implacable revenge and hate. This may be taken as the general rule, for if his disposition be of a peculiar kind, he may turn out a foaming maniac or a drivelling idiot. This is only a probability. But if reason retain her throne—if the mind remain unhinged, hate will rankle in the depths of the heart until its flame is quenched in blood. Has not our blood often run cold at the tales of murder which stain the history of man, the most of which can be traced to adultery ? Have we not often shed a burning tear

of sympathy over the many tales of suffering which this crime has super-induced ?

The consequences of it are not confined to the individual perpetrators. Its bitterness and evil are frequently felt over all society, as by a "continued impulse." When spurious offspring is confounded with lawful heirs, even the laws of nations and empires are broken. Then the fury of faction is aroused, sedition opens her mouth, conspiracy lights the torch in the darkness of night, and ere long the dogs of civil war are unchained. How many times has adultery deluged some nations of Europe and Asia with blood ? How many times has it arrayed father against son, not alone in the stormy council chamber, but in the shock of bloody and deadly conflict ? How often has it armed brother against brother, with deadly hate, on the very field of death ? How often has it raised the war-cry of kinsman against kinsman, and made them close in mortal strife ? The history of man affords many such dreadful examples. We may, indeed, see the last of its earthly terrors consummated in civil war. It has fomented treasons, plots and spoils, and it will do so again. It lighted the faggot, erected the gibbet, and put the gleaming axe into the nervous hand of the headsman. It opened the prison doors to the wildest passions of men, until every enormity, every crime and outrage characterized him as an abandoned savage. It brought utter desolation upon whole families, societies and nations, ruined princely fortunes, and made the fields grow wild with the weed of the wilderness. It filled whole cities with mourning widows and starving orphans. It reared, upon the ruins of religion, a throne for the goddess of anarchy, and ruined all economy, industry and commerce. It overturned governments, and buried in the ruins of society, all gentleness, placability and charity. It subverted all morality, scoffed at the regular habits, proprieties and tranquillity of life ; and it so degraded man that he became a disgrace to his kind and a disgust to his Creator. If circumstances should so combine as to favor all this, adultery would inevitably do the same again, even at this day. The providence of God may prevent such things happening again ; but if adultery should have its way, all these evils would most certainly overtake us. Are not the ruinous lawsuits, the fearful quarrels, the bitter malignity, the ravaging hates which it fosters, even at this day among ourselves, earnest of what it has, and probably will accomplish hereafter, viz. : the subversion of the laws of God, of nature and society ?

We see enough of its immediate results to strike us with terror, on account of its ultimate effects. We see the parents of the guilty covered with ignominy, and their hearts pierced with a thousand daggers. We see her kindred covered with disgrace, until they sink into the grave. We see innocent children smitten with the curse of God, in foul and fatal diseases, of which this crime is the mother. We see it the nurse and fosterer of

premature age, of incurable sicknesses and disgusting infirmities. We see it not only rob the soul of its glorious hopes, but of many of its mysterious faculties and priceless capacities. We see it emasculating the mind and withering the body. We see wisdom departing as if ashamed at its touch; patriotism, magnanimity, generosity, propriety and prudence die away under the heat of its lust, like fresh foliage beneath the fiery beams of a vertical sun. We see it making of man a hideous monster, of whom the species becomes ashamed—a strange abortion which no maker will acknowledge, but some outraged law of nature, which no father can honorably claim nor no mother lovingly nurse. We see it cover the earth with all crime—the great fountain of shame and the exhaustless source of sorrow. And we see it, in the highest sense of the word, the worst enemy to man, because it ruins him here and plunges him into hell hereafter. These are but a very few of the aggravations of this dreadful crime. We might follow up one after the other, until this volume would be redoubled, but we will stop here, hoping that the general remarks already made shall prove sufficient.

Although the natural consequences of the crime itself would seem a sufficient punishment to the offender, yet in some ages of the world, among some nations, it was visited with the most severe of human penalties. Of old, while the Jews were under a theocracy, which is the purest of all governments, adultery was punished with death, being a crime viewed as destructive to society and as a frightful sin against God. Among the Egyptians, the male offender received a thousand lashes and the woman lost her nose. The Romans punished it in various ways; sometimes banishment was the penalty, and at others, cutting off the ears and the nose—at other times, with scourging, burning and beheading, etc. The Greeks put out the eyes of the guilty pair. Spain and Poland adopted the Roman law. The Saxons burnt the adulteress, and erected a gallows over her ashes and hanged the adulterer. England once punished it with death; sometimes the man was banished, and the woman lost her nose and ears. In this age, it is viewed generally, in all Christian countries, only as a spiritual offense. (See Paley's *Mor. and Pol. Phil.*, Vol. I.) All these punishments are but the mere expressions of the abhorrence in which God taught men to hold this great crime. Man, in society, had certainly to visit it with extreme severity, in order that the very essentials to society might not be destroyed. These punishments were defensive measures, taken against this arch defiler and destroyer of the human race. They were but types of that awful punishment which it will receive at the consummation of all earthly things. When God governed the Jews, He commanded them to put the adulterer to death. We find Him also, in the memorable case of David, visiting it with terrible temporal punishments. All this goes to show that

the unclean, the fornicator and the adulterer, will not escape the immediate wages of his crime even in this world, and that in the next it will be repaid with perdition. Is eternal woe an expiation for this thick and dark complication of many crimes in one? God is the best judge. Can an eternity of weeping and anguish be too great a punishment for that crime, one act of which may have dragged down many souls to eternal death? One act of which may have spread misery and shame over whole provinces, deluged a nation in the blood of countrymen slain by countrymen, made orphans and widows without number, ruined parents and families, destroyed the blessings of peaceful society, strewed many death-beds with poisoned thorns, brought reproach upon religion and the providence of God, exposed innocence and happiness to nameless perils and dangers, and, mayhap, have eternally ruined many a soul for whom the blood of God's Son was shed; what, I ask, can expiate such a crime as this? Go to the foot of Mount Sinai, and there take counsel of the justice of Him who thundered out the law. Leave all vain palliation behind, and ask Him who dwells in that impenetrable cloud, what offering can be made for such a sin? Mark well the answer that rises high above that terrible storm, and if you are an adulterer, the sound thereof will strike you dead. Will you come before the Lord, and bow yourself before the Most High God? will He not be satisfied with many burnt offerings with calves of a year old? No, no; the cattle upon ten thousand hills, offered upon altars of gold, cannot wash away its blasting taint. Will the Lord be pleased with a thousand rams or with ten thousand rivers of oil? No, no; He will have no burnt offerings, neither can all the oil and spices of the balmy East, arrest His arm in dragging the culprit to despair. Will you give your first born for this transgression, the fruit of your body for the sin of your soul? No, no; you may blow up the furnace in the valley, and immolate victim and victim—you may take your first born from its mother's breast—you may, one by one, sacrifice your little ones until you are childless, and last of all, you may throw yourself on the smouldering pile of the sacrificed, until the smoke of your body be borne on the wings of the wind to the very throne of God, yet God will not see you innocent, nor will He pronounce you pure. Shall you then call a holy fast, and convoke the solemn assembly? shall you bring the ministers and priests of the Most High God between the porch and the altar to weep for forty days, and by their tears to deprecate the anger of heaven? Shall you make the assembled nation cry out, "Spare thy people, and give not, O Lord, thine heritage to reproach?" No, no; your crime would cut short the prayers of an assembled nation, and turn the tears of a whole people into a vain expectation. Jehovah would not be appeased. What, then, will arrest God's anger from you? What sheathe the flaming sword of justice? What withhold the right arm

of the Almighty? Wake up thou solemn echoes of eternity—ye white robed messengers of heaven's deep mysteries—come and say how the adulterer's shame may be washed away. Come, Oh come, ye bright angels, from your high abodes, and tell us how the perfidious guilt of the fallen one can be blotted out from the records of heaven? Men and angels give ear; ye cedars on the heights of Lebanon, bow low your heads; ye tribes that travel up the holy mount of God, stand still that ye may hear! Naught but the blood of Jesus, the ONLY BEGOTTEN of God, can hide the adulterer from the vengeance of heaven. Naught but the shade of the "Rock of Ages" can soften and temper the fiery beams of Jehovah's wrath against this unclean offender. The spirit of the Ancient of days Itself must plead with unutterable groanings. He who sits on the right hand of all power, high above all principalities and dominions, must come down and make humble intercession, ere adultery can be forgiven. The offender himself must run in haste to the house of the Pharisee, heedless of all the scorn and reproaches of his fellow creatures, and there publicly wash, with his fast flowing tears, the feet of Him who bled for sin, and dry them with the hair of his head. He must mourn night and day for his transgressions, with a grief wilder and deeper than the lamentations of Rachel. He must move the very stones with his sorrow. He must have recourse during life to sackcloth and ashes, and his spirit must experience all the inscrutable convulsions of fear and sorrow, which made David of old to go heavily all the day long, as if he mourned for his mother. Tears must be his meat day and night, and he must thirst for forgiveness as the hart desireth the water brooks. His soul must be vexed within him, and his spirit must be disquieted. He must take hold of the horns of the altar as one that has no hope, but in the boundless mercy of God, who may be angry yet is plentiful in forgiveness. Then, indeed, a voice of peace will reach him, and the terrific thunders of Sinai shall be stilled. A blessed calm will shed itself over the soul, until fear give way to love, and sorrow to joy.

Before proceeding further, we must say a few words as to the positive duties implied in this commandment. They are generally—*sobriety, temperance and chastity of body*. In order to cultivate these, we are to eschew all temptations, incitements and tendencies to this crime. We must, in the words of our Lord, "watch and pray," and not only so, but "pray and watch," that our passions may be subdued, and all our thoughts and imaginations chastened down. We ought, if need be, to practice "bodily austerities," fastings and watchings, like the saints of old, that all our desires may be properly brought into subjection, and be mollified and purified. We ought to have not only our hands, but also our minds continually employed and our time fully engaged, that idleness and ease, the great parents of adultery, may be none of ours. These are two great evils which attend

upon the rich, for which they are much to be pitied. They are two of the curses which follow riches, more to be dreaded and to be more closely watched, than the midnight thief or assassin. A heart unemployed with proper subjects of meditation—without the necessary cares of ordinary life—will soon get filled with the imaginations of an unclean spirit. Hands which can find no labor to perform, will discover some mischief to do, in order that the monotony of an idle life may be broken in upon and relieved. A soul which eats and takes its ease, almost inevitably will, sooner or later, become engaged and absorbed in the service of the evil one, and fall a prey to his wiles. Idleness and ease are but the removing of the walls which enclose the vineyard. The luxurious fruit within attracts the wild inhabitant of the forest to come and eat—he does come, and then the fruit and foliage alike are trampled in the mire. There is no necessity to the rich to labor that they and their families may eat bread; the kindness of the Giver of every good and perfect gift, for some wise but mysterious purpose, relieves them from the curse—“*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.*” This is at once a great blessing and a great temptation. It superinduces (if permitted to do so), a desire to find employment, in seeking out new and sinful pleasures, which, at first, gratify the pampered passions, and at the last, oversatiate and pall upon them. This is an abuse of the gift of God. Instead of employing this blessing to their own good, and to the melioration of their kind, the idleness and ease to which riches secure them, are the rocks upon which these favored ones of the world themselves are too frequently wrecked, and towards which they drag their inferiors in worldly position and prosperity, by the irresistible force of example. The passion which seeks adultery, being strong, sweet and alluring, will, without fail, take advantage of ease and idleness, and of many other things which the rich can only enjoy. Let the rich and poor, therefore, be well guarded against all the incitements and temptations thereof, by watching over all their inordinate desires, and by bringing all their sinful passions under the control of a religious mind and a right reason.

Now, brethren, although you may think that you have sufficient reason already to charge me with puritannic notions—though you may, with the sons and daughters of pleasure, join in charging me with ranting, yet I will not cease to seek the ability to speak the truth in candor and without shame. You need not tell me that my eye is jaundiced, and that my heart is prejudiced. Truth falls not beneath such harmless strokes. You believe, I believe, that God speaks to all men through their senses. This is an irrefragable truth. What then? I will not forego the privilege of making such use of my senses as God may permit me. You cannot help doing the same. An ass believed his sight, notwithstanding the mad appeals of a wicked and enraged prophet, or the inconsiderate blows of his staff. Let

us take a lesson from this humble animal, and take shame to ourselves without it. If we will follow its unerring example in this particular, we also will believe what we see, in the face of all contradiction, and in the very teeth of popular sentiment.

What, then, do we see? Do we ask you this question because it is doubtful that you do see? No. We will not insult you with ridicule. Do we make it, then, that we may have an opportunity to vituperate and to utter spleen? No, indeed—truth is more potent than either. Why, then, do we ask it? Simply to direct your attention to things against which many of us, in the very EXCESS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY, may have KINDLY closed our eyes. Let such Christian charity cease from amongst us—its forbearance neutralizes the woes of the Lord God, most mighty. We will anticipate your questions, and at the same time be the catechumens. Do we not see the adulterous harlot clothed in soft and pleasing attire? Does she keep hid away in the seclusion of the voluptuous couch? or are her words whispered within her deadly chamber? No, no; we see her boldly in the front of the throng at the gate, and true to her ancient character, the feet of this strange woman abide not in her house. We hear her voice gathering her victims, a numerous multitude, as the “sylvan horn” calls the scattered huntsmen to the scene of death. Behold and say what are these ruinous, fantastic and costly dresses, which are odoriferous of aloes, myrrh and cinnamon? A puritan would merely pronounce them foolish; but a man of closer observation would say that they are the trimmings which adorn wanton loveliness. What mean all these fatiguing and endless artifices to deck the person and FORCE beauty—all these silly subterfuges to cover some fancied deformity, or to hide the untimely wrinkles and discolorings brought on by drinking deep in the fatal cup of pleasure? Are they not the dissimulations of the strange woman? Why are these open revelries so frequent, where wanton mirth, and polished debauchery, and fashionable dissipation disgust religion and wisdom? Why these giddy dancings, and these voluptuous and swelling strains of the enrapturing song? Why are these parties of pleasure so numerous, and why are they suffered, not alone to interfere with our domestic duties, but also, alas, to supersede entirely those we owe to the God of high heaven? Is it not because we have amongst us those who love the offerings of the subtle woman, and who find pleasure in receiving the solaces of her love? What is this impatience of restraint, this forgetfulness of home and inattention to honest labor? What is all this false delicacy, this fastidiousness and taking of ease? Are they not the teachings of her whose house is filled with the dead? What are these idle flirtations, gay contentions, delicate but empty and artificial attentions? Are they not the artifices of her who tells her victims THAT THE GOOD MAN IS NOT AT HOME? What are all these excesses

and extravagancies which have ceased to astonish us? what are all these useless and expensive elegancies, got up for empty parade and display? May they not be compared to the tapestry of the harlot's chamber, and to the perfume which intoxicates her victims? Who hath uttered the dreadful words, "that prostitutes of both sexes have become the nursing fathers and mothers of our State?" Horrible picture! Who hath made the crushing calculation, that the money spent in procuring divorces, and gained as damages in cases of adultery and seduction, would support a numerous ministry and house the poor of the State? I seek neither to prove nor to dwell upon this. We will rather point you to the records of shame—the public prints—which are filled with the separations of married men and married women; which are filled with the murders and assignments superinduced by adultery. We may excuse or moralize these divorces as best we may—we may cover or forget the perfidy and shame which they would disclose to us, yet they stand up in judgment against us as a people, and never, never can God look upon us in pleasure as long as such a state of things exists. I care not, should I be alone in my opinion, that if there be a God in heaven, if He be that God who is revealed to us, such things cannot go unpunished.

Let us, my brethren, one and all, look again, in deep shame and humiliation, at the numerous houses of prostitution, not alone in our cities, but in our towns and even villages. Are these nothing? or do they not exist? Aye, they do exist as monuments to our disgrace. Fortunes have been acquired by them. Does this tell nothing? In our cities, splendid properties are owned—by whom? By prostitutes. Great God! and this is a Christian country! Drag the adulterous woman into the midst, and let him who is innocent in the vast concourse, cast the first stone at her. Where did these fortunes come from? whence did these splendid possessions come? Let the curtain drop; the answer is given and the multitude has gone away condemned. But I see in this crowd, as they go along, not only single men, not only young men, not only poor men, but I also see MARRIED men. Yonder, too, goes lustful age, and there goes a great company of the lords of creation—all liberal patrons of this vice!!

I have a few words to say to the ladies of California. To those wretched females who have prostituted their persons, our words cannot come, because they will not listen. We would, however, say something to those ladies who pervert their influence and example. Perhaps there is no country in the world where woman is more potent for good or evil, than in California. Her influence is universally acknowledged here by the opposite sex. What, then, has she to account for? Has her influence turned the beam AGAINST GOD OR AGAINST THE WORLD? The prostitution of the person, in the sight of God, is not a much greater sin than the prostitution of influ-

ence, especially when that influence might redound largely to His glory. We take it not upon ourselves to judge you. Yet there is *One* that is able—*One* that will judge you in the latter days. You know well that the gallantry of American gentlemen has raised you to a position in which you can do much good or evil, as you may choose. You know well also that the Christian religion hath smitten asunder the chains that bound your sex to slavery and degradation. To this religion, you most certainly owe all that you are. What then? Do you abuse the influence which the other sex suffers you to wield? What return do you make that religion which has made you the brightest ornaments, and the most powerful conservators of society? Has the Church no complaints to make of your neglect of her? Can it be said now that woman, who was the last at the cross and the first at the grave, has at length learned to weave the scarlet robe and cut the mocking reed for Him who wept with and bled for her? It is, alas, too true; your influence can almost be secured for anything, but for the cause of Him who was an affectionate and loving companion to your sisters of old. You will be seen in the house of pleasure; you will go to each silly amusement; you can find time and means to spend upon vanities and trifles light as air. But when the ministers of God look to you to strengthen their hands, you meet their demands with idle excuses and frivolous arguments. You have no time or means to spend for God, because you have not the will. Wherever woman goes, there man will go also. Whatever woman does, that will man do also. May we not with justice, then, attribute to this reason the slim attendance at Church, and the crowd in the theater? May we not, at least to some extent, attribute to the sinful levity of woman, the outrageous irreligion of man? May we not, in some degree, see the reason of our lamentable state of society, in the censurable example and misdirected influence of woman? In a country and age such as this, when we see religion despised, morality depraved, Churches empty and Sundays desecrated, the more thinking of us will look and consider how woman gives her example—how she wields her influence. And if she prostitute these, then indeed there is no difficulty in assigning the legitimate cause for many grievous evils which afflict society. Probably the excitement which surrounds you from day to day, deprives you of the time to consider these things well. Take care; the days are fast coming wherein you will have to confess that you yourselves, added to and sustained this excitement, by an indulgence in each frantic pleasure—by adding round to round of irrational and expensive enjoyment. Your hearts, ladies, are kind, if they could only be reached. Your nature is still that of woman; let me, therefore, beg of you to reflect, and that, too, seriously, for the Saviour is now calling for the aid of your influence to heal the heart of His people. Look upon the many wrecks around you, and ask if it be not

reasonable to expect your powerful example and influence? There are many men and women, whose hearts are pierced with incurable sorrows, and whose hopes are extinguished forever by female infidelity to the marriage vow. We see the closest and most sacred connections invaded, defiled and violated, and the most filthy and criminal amours kindling the flames of discord in peaceful families. We see children prematurely vicious, not merely by lax and careless training, but also by nameless precept and example. We know that domestics hold the precious reputation of mistress and master on their tongues, and extort a heavy tax as the price of silence. We behold the ruined of adultery repair to the deep debauch, to become more impure and tainted still. We see the fresh blossoms of young virtue and unexperienced chastity, which were nursed by parental care, and fostered by the most scrupulous solicitude, fall away from the slender stem, scorched by the frosts of early crime and shame. We behold boldness, folly and depravity sitting where modesty, delicacy and timidity should reign. We may hear, now and again, a mourner sighing and weeping over fallen virtue; over the loss of the delicate down, which the hand of the spoiler brushed from the soul, but this is like the comfort poor Job experienced in the heat of his affliction.

To you, then, ladies of California, we look for a melioration of things. We would have you regard the ties of matrimony as sacred and inviolable. We would rather have you view this holy institution as a sacrament, than as a mere civil contract. Do not for your husband's sake, for your own sake, for the sake of your children, your sex and society, cultivate any lax or easy opinions of it. It is woman's only hope in life, and man's only assurance of happiness. What is woman without it, *i. e.*, what is she without virtue? or what is man without it? What on earth makes woman lovely or valuable but virtue? and what on earth can preserve her virtue but the holy estate of matrimony? Let us all, then, beware of violating its obligations, lest we commit adultery, for there is no night dark enough to hide its shame, and no grave deep enough wherein to lodge its accumulated guilt. Especially let woman look well to her virtue, for an ocean of tears can never win back to the virgin or to the wife, her shipwrecked chastity. But hell can scarcely punish the deliberate and professional seducer of female virtue.

SERMON XII.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

TEXT—Exodus xx, 15 : “*Thou shalt not steal.*”

HERE, my brethren, we have a law against all kinds of dishonesty. All the numberless tricks of the dishonest man may be resolved into the crime here prohibited, whether they be the secret taking away or purloining of our neighbor's property, without his knowledge or consent ; or whether they be the unlawful “getting or detaining” of anything, whereby our neighbor would be wronged, and which of right belongs to him. Direct theft is that kind of dishonesty which the professed thief or desperado practices. Indirect theft includes all that round of strange and covert dishonesties, by which men become hastily rich, and which subjects every man to injustice and wrong.

Human laws are enacted, against what may be called ordinary robbery and theft, so that the fear of immediate punishment deters men, more or less, from being guilty of it. But against many dishonesties, which are indeed true and proper thefts, there are no laws, save that of God, which carry with them, to the generality of mankind, little or no fear, and little or no respect. Against the depredations of the open thief or robber, society has pretty well secured itself. But against the endless and ingenious frauds of the HONEST robber, so to speak, there is no safeguard but knowing and defensive experience, or counter craft and overreaching ingenuity. Men have a thousand ways of eluding all human law against dishonesty. The chicanery of him who makes haste to be rich, outwits all the foresight of the wisest and most provident of human legislators. The endless details of man's dishonesty and trickery, can only be embraced in that law which bids us put on bowels of mercy ; that sublime law which is the concentrated essence of all moral duty and obligation between man and man ; that law which makes it a matter of conscience to do unto our neighbor as we would have him do unto us.

In the process of buying and selling, the most flagrant and effectual dishonesties are committed with the utmost impunity. In the strange intri-

cacies of business; on the broad sea of commerce; in the conduct of all the ordinary traffic and affairs of life, there runs a vein of the most heartless and finished roguery. This is tolerated, as being the usages of trading life; yet it is unmitigated theft in the sight of God. We see it apparently in some degree necessary, or at least expedient for him who embarks in business, to provide himself with a share of that cunning which can meet cunning; that vigilance and SHARPNESS which will secure him against the wiles and the assaults of the professional sharper. Men may, indeed, think it necessary to become skilled in these matters, and that it is fair to meet dishonesty by dishonesty—to pay theft with theft, swindling with swindling, injury with injury, and oppression with oppression. Yet the excuse upon which such conduct is grounded is unjust and insufficient; and the necessity and expediency are, at the least, only apparent. We hold that there may be an excuse involved in the circumstances, which may overtake the poor, necessitous thief—for the scorned and rejected vampire. But we hold that there can be no sufficient excuse whatever in the case of him, who, from his mere haste to become rich, preys upon society by a course of underhand dishonesties, and by a daily round of base and mean trickeries. Necessity, in the former case, may excuse—but since avarice is the actuating principle in the latter case, the man so acting is guilty of theft before God, however much it may be overlooked by us.

We cannot enter into the infinite details of the dishonesties perpetrated in trade, or in any other phase of life—we can only generalize.

A fraudulent PURCHASE is a theft. Whoever buys anything at a price which he knows perfectly well is a dishonest one, is brother to the thief; some say a cowardly thief. A dishonest purchase is a presumption, would we say a proof? that the man guilty of it, would steal, should a safe opportunity offer itself. To take advantage either of *ignorance* or *inexperience*, or of DISTRESSING *circumstances*, in a business transaction, is not very unlike the thief, taking advantage of the sleep or absence of him, whose property he steals. It is not merely an abandonment of all charity, but also a plain and open infringement of that precept, which requires us to provide all things honestly in the sight of God and man. It deprives the seller fraudulently, of what is rightfully his due, and filches his property from him as effectually and dishonestly as an open theft or robbery would. It betrays a coldness and heartlessness little short, if any, of that which characterizes the professional swindler. It discloses the calculating selfishness of villainy, and the griping avarice of the wrinkled and dastardly miser.

A dishonest SALE is a theft in the sight of God. It is not only a very high breach of the confidence placed in the seller's truth and honesty, but it is, beyond all dispute, a deliberate robbery of the purchaser's money or

property. What, pray, is the difference between him who employs deceit and lies to acquire riches, and him who uses arms to extort money from you on the highway? Only in the means employed. This difference makes us view the one a cowardly thief, and the other a reckless desperado. The only redeeming trait in the robbery committed by the fraudulent seller is, that it suffers its victim to go for a time, in BLESSED IGNORANCE of the injury done him. The only aggravation in the crime of the footpad is, that when it is committed, the nerves of his victim are somewhat shocked, and his courage somewhat taxed. About the one there is all the dryness of MATTER OF FACT, or business; about the other there is a dream of romance, which is quite a consideration. A burglar gags his victim to prevent alarm—it is a necessary operation. The cheating seller, by willful lying and loud protestations, lulls all the alarm of suspicion, and throws dust into the eyes of his victim—this is also a necessary operation, only a little more pleasant than the other. The highwayman comes to the point at once; dispatch is in his eye; and the moment he fingers the coin he disappears. But the oily tongued seller, with a voice trembling with the strong emotions of a DOGGED HONESTY—the immaculate man, who appeals to his unimpeached truth and honor, robs his friend in a kind, pleasant manner, which to be sure, is a great comfort to all concerned. It is a mistake to think that the necessitous thief has no notions of honor. He will not, as a general thing, fasten upon the poor, because their blood is too thin for him. It is the direst necessity that will drive him to such an extremity. But the seeker after what are called bargains, *i. e.*, profitable purchases, makes his way to the abodes of distress and embarrassment, not with charity in his right hand, but to turn misfortune to his own account. Among the ignorant and distressed, he can often strike the best bargains. Whatever comes into his wide spread NET is to him FISH. From the gorgeous spendthrift, down to the destitute widow and starving orphan will be kindly accommodated. Nothing is too lofty for him—nothing too mean. Anything from a splendid estate to a rotten crib, if it only can be made a good bargain. Any lady—every lady, great and small, easy or distressed, sharp or simple, good or bad, are all legitimate game—the only question is, can they be victimized? A man, with such a capacious maw is certainly a leviathan thief.

The fraudulent SELLER bears an analogous character to the dishonest BUYER. He is a smiling, bowing, polite and mannerly sort of thief. Lies are also his trade, imposition his study, and swindling eloquence engages him continually. He will not afford himself the time to distinguish between those to whom he ought to behave mercifully, or to whom unmercifully. He ought certainly to deal fairly with all; but if a man is determined to become a villain, he ought to make distinctions among his victims. No matter how poor a man may be, the dishonest seller will cheat him even in

his property; no matter how distressed, he will add, as far as he can, to his difficulty; no matter how rich, he would fleece him with an overflowing kindness, and make him as poor as Lazarus. Yet you must remember, that all this time he imagines himself doing quite a legitimate business, and after a day's labor in this arrant knavery, he would not scruple one moment to send a vulgar thief to the penitentiary.

I hope, my brethren, you do not understand me as speaking of those gentlemen who engage in the lawful and necessary traffics of life. Their callings are honest and honorable; and they are as much entitled to the profits and other emoluments, which accrue from such, as the daily laborer is entitled to his daily hire. The men who engage in the various branches of lawful traffic, often become honestly rich. They engage in such with honest and honorable intentions—they risk their money, they spend their time, they labor faithfully at once for their own good, and for the good of their fellow men; therefore, neither God nor man will deny them the fruits of their labor. If fortunate, they are deservedly so—if otherwise, they must have become the victims to either of the rogues we have endeavored to describe, or to some others we are about to consider.

Taking advantage of a puffed and fictitious credit, and borrowing money upon the strength of it, is another resort of the dishonest man. A penniless fellow, with some wit and tact, occupying a certain position in life, is seldom without a circle of unprincipled, though influential friends. With designs, which are best known to themselves, they will touch up their friend's credit with rather a florid brush. On the strength of this, large loans are easily procured, and heavy debts are easily contracted; but these, the man of fictitious credit and his coadjutors never dream of making good, or liquidating. Men of all ages, shades and colors get, somehow or other, involved in the affair—families, and even the entire community may get interested in the bubble. But when the proper time comes, this bubble which rode lightly and beautifully on the tide of human affairs, suddenly bursts and disappears. All the dupes discover themselves to be the victims of a grand swindle, and they are left to submit with the best grace they can assume. The gentleman robber then retires into the shades of fashionable life with his booty; and the very community which he plundered nearly kills him with its smiles and congratulations. He is pronounced to be what common people call a "smart fellow," *i. e.*, a man who cuts his way to fortune through all the laws of God, without once offending any law of man. This is indeed smart in the eye of the world; but when God will come to deal with it, it will inevitably turn out a bitter foolishness.

To many it is a perplexity, why the petty thief is paraded in the chain gang, while the splendid depredator is fawned upon and flattered. The

reason is probably because a "small affair" savors too much of the plebeian, and because a tremendous sweep is deemed really aristocratic. How faithfully does the world sustain its character! Poverty with vice, and poverty with virtue receive the same treatment; and on the other hand, riches with vice, and riches with virtue receive the selfsame warm homage. It will actually, as the dog, lick the hand that smites it, if that hand only glitter with gold. What, it may be asked, what great good does it do society to adorn the poor and friendless thief with a chain? Think you that it is an effectual check to evil doers? Human law asks him not what misfortune or what necessity drove to the commission of theft; but it adds to his misfortune deep disgrace. This is what poverty and misfortune must expect from the cruel world. A poor man steals, not to become rich, but to meet the pressing demands of a present and pinching necessity. The world, that should have relieved this necessity, recoils upon its child, and fastens upon it the badge of shame. But what is the treatment of the fashionable and aristocratic thief? how does it punish him, who robbed to become rich? to wallow in the frantic pleasures of luxury and affluence? The world is dazzled by his well feathered nest—it looks up wistfully to the rock upon which he built it, and it begs him to descend from his high perch to receive its warm congratulations. He is received with open arms—he becomes the subject of many soft and sympathizing tongues; and he is fondled by round after round of flatteries, as if he were returning from a field of victory, with captives bound to his chariot wheels. To say the least of it, the "ARISTOCRATIC DEED" gains for him a proud and promising position. It is little short of an absurdity to preach to the world that "money is the root of all evil." IT WON'T BELIEVE IT. To the world there is no evil whatever, but the want of money. The man who possesses it, should be the very personification of turpitude, yet there is none so great or good as he in the world's eye; he is faultless if he only possess the God—money. "He who steals my purse, steals trash" is about one of the most nonsensical sentiments ever uttered, if there be any philosophy or truth in the usages of this age; for according to the notions of men now-a-days, all else is trash but the "PURSE." Now "GOOD NAME" is trash, *morality* is trash, *honesty* is trash, *virtue* is trash, *religion* itself is trash, everything is trash but money, because it is the only key to the floodgates of pleasure, honor, fame and luxury. It even opens the heart of woman, and makes her love whom she ought to despise. It makes a rogue an honest man, and an honest man a rogue. It raises shame to honor, and changes the rags of humility to the robes of state. It hides every deformity, and cures every disease. It makes wise men fools, and fools wise. It makes the illiterate most skilled in letters, and turns dunces into sage philosophers. It changes the blood of the plebeian, and makes it run a rich, a pure patrician stream.

It raises the weak to power, and drags the powerful into weakness. It makes the abject an object of wonder and delight, while it makes abjects of the great and good. It makes crime a virtue, and virtue a crime—truth falsehood, and falsehood truth. Oh say, thou magic and potent god, what thou *canst* not do? Canst thou not storm the gates of heaven itself, and make your worshippers rule supreme there? That thou canst not do—your magic spell is broken in the grave, and God be thankful for it. The world no doubt thinks you can purchase heaven. Who, then, will call *money* trash? Come forth now, thou insulted shade of the immortal bard, and vindicate your sickly creed. What are God, eternity, immortality, soul, conscience or death, to *money*, to power, to influence, to office, to ease, to pleasure and splendor? Perish the comparison—money is all. Let sages ever after this, hide their heads, for having so long deceived us; let spiritual men look to their well worn sandals, and return from their upward journey—for money is all. Let the soul herself cease to prune her ethereal wings—let her aspirations flag—let her cease her sublime longings—let her ineffable hopes be accounted as fairy dreams, which are fated soon to be all dreamt out, and let her shut her eyes and ears against all her bright visions and high promises; because *MONEY* is at last found to be all that man requires—it is the elixir of life—'tis the philosopher's stone. But how are the poor of the earth to be comforted? God must take care of them; and money must control the world!! Excuse me brethren for this digression—we shall now proceed.

There is another kind of theft practised by the nobly—the powerfully “*sharp*”—commonly called *OPPRESSION*. There are men who consider themselves the lords of creation; who imagine that the ocean of glory is to be ploughed by them alone. It is indeed strange that such highflown sentiments should associate themselves with theft: nevertheless such is the case. They will not suffer any Cæsar to dispute the world with them; it was certainly made for them alone. You must understand, my brethren, that it is not impossible to a rich and powerful man to become a thief. Riches gain on the affections of man—the more they are possessed, the more desired; therefore, it is often the case, that the powerful rob, by oppressing and extorting, that they may be the richer still. It is a very easy matter for a man to imagine himself poor; once convinced of this, he will use all means in his power to become rich; and if oppression be the only means whereby he can obtain riches, he will not long remain poor. There are men, rich, influential and powerful, who think that they have not got enough of this world's goods, and who will extort from and press down, for the sake of wealth, those they may have in their power. There are men who will grind, grind, grind the poor, until they can grind them no longer, who will sell their influence to a wicked cause for filthy lucre; pros-

titute their authority and power for filthy lucre, and damn their souls by the possession and spending of the unrighteous spoils, robbed from the poor and needy—who will oppress the widow in her distress, and forsake the orphan in his destitution—who will remorselessly fasten upon biting necessity, and supplicating need, and by tyranny and extortion make them the means of unholy gain—will feast, riot, and revel, add thirst to drunkenness, and fatten upon the plunderings of poverty; and then descend into hell, followed by the loud maledictions of the poor. There are hundreds of such men in the world, who thus live, almost from the cradle to the grave, on the spoils of extortion and oppression. This is cruel robbery—'tis murderous theft.

There is a theft involved in what is called "MATCH MAKING"—it is a very peculiar kind. The rich, powerful and honorable are its victims. I am not certain that it can be made out a theft to your satisfaction. However, we will try. Designing parents, I know, will laugh at the idea of such a thing being theft. There is a daughter, then, to be disposed of, who has a beautiful face and an ugly mind, always busy about the utmost vanities and as useless, and thoughtless as possible. She certainly has a few accomplishments, which are ten-fold worse than useless, because they cultivate affectation and extravagance. Her parents must see her settled in life, as indeed they ought; but the settlement must be all profit, and no loss to them and family. The match to be made, must be advantageous. The mother especially, thinks it *her* province to teach the young lady to pawn herself off on some wealthy scion of aristocracy, who has nothing enviable but his fortune. The visions of levees, audiences, parties, dinners and balls float through the brains of the artful mother, and set her fairly to work. By arts and wiles, which none dare practise but an ambitious mother, the matrimonial noose at length is adjusted to the languid lover's neck, and he swings. The ambitious family in this way gets his fortune, and any influence he may have, merely by giving him an apology for a wife.

But there is also a son to be disposed of. And why not, since there are plenty of heiresses sighing for lovers? This son probably can never be of any use, either to himself or any other, unless, indeed, he can be made an instrument of dishonesty. It is settled long before the gay Lothario's worthless education is finished, that none dare aspire to his hand but an heiress. He is most likely made to believe that nothing can resist him, and that he can make the ladies follow him as readily as Orpheus drew the rocks and waters after him with a reed. This, of course, inspires him with the necessary courage to undertake anything. At a moment's notice he is prepared to storm any citadel the parents may point him to. A victim is fixed upon, and a tremendous artillery is opened immediately. Her

parents may take the alarm, and bravely defend the widening breach, but the gallant soldier in this bloodless war mounts it and victoriously leads away the prize, either by elopement or seduction. The conqueror then can dictate terms. Both families make friends—the heiress' fortune is secured, and everything is then as it ought to be. This sort of theft is practised and accomplished much oftener than we dream of in our philosophy.

The aiding of fraud, theft or robbery in any manner whatever, is strictly prohibited by the law under consideration, as being no less than theft itself. Going shares with the swindler, is swindling—it is a communication in his crime. Advising or aiding any wrong, is to become guilty. Winking at or sustaining oppression, brings us into the same judgment with the tyrant thief. The receiving, concealing or appropriating of any or all of the proceeds of dishonesty, is in effect to steal. To employ agents to execute swindles concocted and planned by ourselves, to help or urge any one to cheat, to procure the means and the opportunities to overreach, to become the servants or instrument of others to carry out wrong, to play upon the fears and weaknesses of the ignorant and inexperienced for the purpose of securing their property, to crush the poor and indigent when we are in power, for the purpose of wrongfully taking from them what they do not owe us; all these, my brethren, resolve themselves into unqualified theft, and without doubt come immediately under the prohibition of the text.

Bankruptcy *MAY* become a theft—it often does. It is the same as borrowing with no intention to restore, which is theft effected by false promises. Bankruptcy is very frequently unavoidable; of such cases we do not speak. We refer only to that which has no other purpose or cause but a desire to defraud and wrong the creditor. In the human laws with respect to debtor and creditor, there are so many corners, crevices, passages and side doors in which a debtor can at pleasure shelter himself, that bankruptcy is often resorted to as a speedy way to become rich. A point blank oath can at once wipe out altogether a man's debts, and enrich him with much spoil, which no creditor can ever claim. Perjury is the instrument of robbery in this case. Mark, then, what happens. Although the false oath wafts the bankrupt out of the reach of all human law, yet it rudely dashes him against the very midst of God's law, by the double impetus of perjury and robbery. It has been said that it is no very easy task "to break the whole of God's law, and yet adroitly miss the whole of human law which is founded on the divine." The thing is yet very common, and it is common because it is easy.

There are certain vices, my brethren, which may be, with all justice, referred to theft, although we do not look upon them, as a general thing, to be tantamount to robbery. We know that the extravagance of individ-

uals not only robs themselves and all depending upon them, but also robs society. We know also that the reckless prodigality of society not only robs individuals, but also the State; hence we have extravagance the cause of mutual spoliation or theft. All that a man spends, over and above his income, really belongs to some other person, in some way or other. To use such means without the authority or permission of those to whom they may rightfully belong, is something very, very much akin to stealing. Extravagance means nothing more than the spending, for our own gratification, more than what we can honestly afford or can honestly provide. This waste, then, to say the least of it, is a kind of theft which, although it may not involve a criminal intention, yet implies as much of an effectual wrong and injustice as does open theft. Its consequences are strictly analogous to those of robbery; nay, they may, with all justice, be identified with them. Extravagance ruins utterly a man's credit and character, so does theft. It beggars all who may depend upon him for sustenance and support; such, indeed, happens less or more to the victim of robbery. The consequences of the best studied villanies cannot inflict greater injuries on man than do those of extravagance. Indeed, it is itself an offspring of that parent which claims theft—some say of the two, it is the elder daughter. The curious desire to be considered affluent; the fond hope to be admitted into what is called fashionable society; an unconquerable longing to enjoy the deadly luxuries of life and to taste the vices of the rich, are some of the features of that parent which claims extravagance as her offspring. A man under the strong influence of these desires, would steal, if theft could secure what he desires. He will become extravagant, if he should happen to think that spending is the surest and shortest road to his ambition.

For example—we can see young men spend often in one night, more than they can earn in a week, merely to be thought "*well off*" and fashionable. They will spend enormous sums of money in balls, in drink, jewelry, fine dress, in theaters, concerts, buggy riding, treating to drinks, jaunts of pleasure, expensive flirtations with ladies; and last, though not least, in gratifying their grosser passions in the house of death. All this is done to be considered POLITELY VICIOUS. All this time, these very young men are most certainly robbing themselves, their creditors, their friends, and perhaps their EMPLOYERS.

Again—an extravagant woman will tax the income of her husband to ruin, in order that suitable articles for her numberless tastes and vagaries may be supplied her. Her dresses alone would beggar quite a respectable income; her luxurious table will keep the husband in perpetual motion on the trade wheel of this fluctuating life. Her parties and attendance at balls, dances and festivities, with their ever recurring expenses, gorge all the fruits of his labor and explode all his profitable projects. Her inconsider-

rate waste of money, in order to be in the very front of fashion, keeps the distracted husband on the run until he falls down, like a jaded hack, exhausted, and then the fatal crash comes—then the gay butterfly has to contemplate her handiwork, when prudence and thought, alas, are too late. She beholds robbery in full blast, creditors cheated, employers wronged, family beggared, and may be dark crime to be atoned for. She at last discovers that she has not only wronged her husband, his creditors and her own children, but also cruelly wronged herself. The very society for whose smile of approbation she ruined herself, will reject her because she cannot any longer maintain the particular style which they recognize as the climax of human felicity. They for whom she thus stole will despise her—and despising her, she is robbed of all her happiness.

The extravagance of whole families is still more sweeping in its consequences. Its blows are felt round the entire circumference of a very large circle, and the prosperity of many individuals, and other families, may thereby be very seriously curtailed. Wherever extravagance is, there we see robbery; at all events, we see it leading to many crimes which may be justly referred to robbery.

Idleness is another vice which not only implies theft, but also invariably leads to it. The man who, from sheer laziness, does not provide the comforts and necessities of life for himself and family, must be on the very nearest road to theft. We are told that “as vinegar is to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.” And, “he that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster.” Since not only the idler must be fed, housed and clothed, but also his wife and family, if he have any; since the sluggard fails to make any provision for himself or them, the industrious are most certainly compelled to make the necessary provision. This is theft on the part of the idler. No man, under ordinary circumstances, has a right to eat unless he works. The drone of society becomes an unrighteous tax upon it, because he lives upon others in idleness. If he eat, he does what he has no right to do, although food may be given him, and taking that which is dishonest to receive, is a kind of theft. It is, at least, fraudulent begging. The lazy man will borrow, knowing that he can never restore; he will promise, without one single intention to fulfill. This is certainly swindling, or obtaining money or anything else, on false pretences. The careless and indolent will neither make nor keep money; in fact, his whole life is a continual infliction of wrong and injury upon the provident and industrious. The idler, of all other men, is the fomenter of every kind of mischief, such as lying, theft, perjury, robbery and murder, and all the other crimes which may be referred to those. Thus he is always somebody's loss, somebody's robber or enemy, somebody's ruin. The bloodhounds of the law have arrived at this con-

clusion from time immemorial, for the bloody snout of justice scents out all the vermin of society, in the haunts and hiding places of sloth. From this class, who may be called constitutional thieves, come multitudes who cost the industrious many an hour's toil and many a hard earned dollar, both to support them in and out of prison, and to fill the mouths of their offspring in order to prevent riots, mobbings, robberies, murders and anarchy. They cannot be strictly called the thieves either of necessity or fashion, but the thriftless thieves of idleness, whose theft neither enriches them nor relieves their necessities for any length of time.

Some have pronounced the trade of "PAWNS" a kind of robbery. It is certainly an extortion, because it enriches him who engages in it, on the private miseries and distresses of others. He takes NEED by the forelock, and forces it upon its knees, a submissive and pliant suppliant. He buys for a half or third value, and sells for the full, sometimes for double value, which is extortion and theft combined.

Undue usury is another kind of theft, for like the pawn it preys upon necessity. It has no mercy or pity for the distress of wife or children, but by the tyranny of avarice, robs them to the utmost of its power, of all the means of procuring the comforts and necessities of life. Its plow goes upon Sunday as well as upon other days. Its gripe grows tighter and tighter the longer it is suffered, and if permitted, it will never let go until the very life blood is squeezed out of its victim, and when the last drop trickles out it casts him to the dogs.

Dishonest speculation is another kind of robbery. The speculator is a great gambler, and speculation is a great game. The turning up of any particular card, cannot make, honestly, another man's property that of his neighbor, nor can it in any way justify the giving or the receiving of such property. Although the money may change hands, with the consent and knowledge of the parties concerned, yet there being no value received or given, the man so giving robs himself and those who may be depending upon him, and the man so receiving is guilty of robbery in the sight of God. It is exactly the same in the great game of speculation. The success or the failure of a speculation must depend upon certain events, which cannot, by any means whatever, justify the losing or gaining of the property staked. The successful speculator is enriched by the venturesome foolishness and spoliation of his neighbor, which is a dishonest way of becoming rich, and the unsuccessful speculator robs not only himself by a dishonest and deliberate hazard of his property to the uncertainty of events, but also his creditors and his family. The hope of success does, by no means, justify the hazard; if so, then the ruined gambler would be justified in his course, because it is this delusive hope that decoys him again and again to the gambling house.

Those trades which enrich men by feeding the vices and extravagances of the people, are no better than robbery. The distillers of the "fire water," the vendors of the same, and all who live upon and are enriched by its sale, are guilty of something which the text certainly prohibits. Generally speaking, ardent spirits is no value for money. On the contrary, it is giving in exchange what no man can deny is a great curse, for what is the means of manifold blessings. This exchange is not honest, and if so it implies a theft. In this case, the thing given for money makes sots, idlers, villains and criminals of men; hence the traffic of it robs these men and their families, and also society, inasmuch as it has to support the pauperism which is consequent upon the excessive use of such articles, and inasmuch as it must take expensive measures to guard itself against the crimes of the drunken and dissipated.

The "*Card*" and "*Billiard*" trades also may be referred to dishonesty. They give no value for money whatever, but are mere "catch pennies." All that they give in exchange, are opportunities to waste time; associations which are disreputable and dangerous; lessons in fighting, drinking and blaspheming; occasions to contract revolting and irregular habits of life, and the worst kind of idleness, and opportunities to get initiated into the sublime mysteries of "*wire pulling*." Indeed, whatever lives upon the vices and extravagances of men must, in the nature of things, be dishonest; for whatever any vice, folly, passion or extravagance will demand, can neither benefit the social, political or religious welfare of men, nor can any such thing be beneficial to soul or body.

There are some things also about the legal profession, which the text prohibits. We admit that litigation is a necessary evil just like war, but it is an evil which really might be greatly meliorated, if men would guard their passions and soften their avarice. Law, although intended to be the guardian of justice, is often made a powerful engine in the accomplishment of fraud and robbery. Men of fertile trickery and flexible principle, have disgraced this honorable profession to such an extent, that many good but misguided men have denounced the profession as an army of rogues. This, of course, is too bitter to be true. Nevertheless it is a truth, that a great many in the profession, are enriched by the vices, weaknesses, extravagances, dishonesties, quarrels and crimes of their fellow men. It is, indeed, too true that many lawyers make it their business to encourage fraudulent litigation, that they may share in the spoils of injustice. All who do this must not be insulted at being called thieves, for God certainly knows them by no other name. But there are many men of noble minds, of stern honesty, of high polish and pure Christianity in this profession. So they ought to be distinguished from the restless pettifogger and the miserable lawyer, whose business it is to subvert and outwit all law. When two

parties go to law, they are certainly both to blame, but one must be decidedly wrong. If the party in the wrong explain such to his counsel, and that counsel agree with his client to make the law, by a course of trickery, sustain the wrong, he is not only a disgrace to his profession, but also a deliberate cheat, an intellectual swindler, and a legal robber. There are so many strange, devious intricacies in the law, that the pettifogger is often victorious, and there is scarcely any help for it.

To conclude—"Thou shalt not steal" means that we cannot defraud, cheat, steal, rob, plunder or swindle anything from our neighbor, either in trade, by profession, by power or praise, by tongue, hands or arms, by art or device, by false promises or pretences, or by any other means whatever, without rendering ourselves, before the judgment seat of God, guilty of theft. "Thou shalt not steal," means, also, that we are to deal honestly with all men in all our transactions; that we must not, willingly or knowingly, wrong or help to wrong any man; that we must be kind to the needy and distressed, and be charitable to them in all our dealings, and be ready to give them, as lending unto the Lord; that we are to provide all things honestly in the sight of God and man; that we are to secure, honestly, a competency for ourselves and families, by an honest calling; that we are to be diligent, with our hands and minds, in working the things that are good and useful, in order that we may eat our bread and peace in honesty, and be not chargeable to any.

My brethren, honesty is a great virtue; it makes man the noblest work of God, and it is, of all others, the best policy. Men who now think it too slow a way to become rich and to gain their objects, must, sooner or later, realize that it is a virtue of which God highly approves. It is better than riches, than honors and fame, because it will stand the wear and tear of eternity. When judgment will be opened, we will not be asked concerning our riches, but concerning our honesty. In that day, even ourselves will lose all interest in the riches we have heaped up—we will have no care who will gather them. All the "FINE THINGS," those golden opportunities for money making will then be as stubble before us. All the smartness of the worldly man will then flee away before the simplicity of the earth's simple ones. The advancement of the foolish will swallow up the sharpness of the worldly wise. We will find it no recommendation whatever in the day of doom, that we have been successful in speculation; that we have made victims bleed on the altars of our avarice; that we have wronged and injured many unsuspecting men. No, no; these will only add to our confusion. We will only be simply asked, were we honest? did we work honestly with our hands, that we might not be chargeable to any? Then will be the time to judge of true wisdom—then will we see the difference between the fool of the world and the undone fool of eternity.

SERMON XIII.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

TEXT—Exodus xx, 16: “*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*”

THIS is that law of the Decalogue which looks to the wellbeing of our fellow man, in his good name, reputation or character. It seems to set CHARACTER OR GOOD NAME at a very high estimate. The first and principal part of a man's happiness is, to have a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards man; the second is, to have a character unblemished, or to live in the world unspotted and untarnished. Both these things are essential to happiness here. Some men have professed, and do so now, that they care not for any opinion the world may entertain concerning them—that they neither desire its good or bad report. This is, indeed, a state of independence to which few, if any, can ever attain. The commandment before us, supposes that a great share of man's happiness depends upon his good name, notwithstanding all that may be said to the contrary. The ultimate effect of all injustice, is to produce sorrow and unhappiness, but if no unhappiness may attend the spoliation of character, there can be no very great wrong in depriving a man of it. If any man can be as happy with a bad name as with a good one, it would be as wrong to deprive him thereof as it would be of his good. But why, then, is this law honored with a place in the Decalogue, if a good name be valueless? Why does it stand there as a stern and irrevocable prohibition against the traduction of character? Is it because the crime prohibited is a mere injustice? or, because its injustice is productive of much that tends to unhappiness and sorrow? I think it is for both reasons, but especially the latter. Whence we may safely conclude, that those who profess to be so very high above this world's opinion of them, as that they are perfectly careless about it, are all the while deceiving themselves and attempting also to deceive others. A good name, in good society, is a passport to innumerable substantial blessings; and a bad name, even in a bad society, generally shuts the doors against advancement and prosperity, and many other blessings which are sources of much real joy and happiness. The destruction of fair

fame is a great evil, and however much some men may think themselves above the good or bad opinion of the world, the pains they cannot help taking in a variety of ways, to have men think well of them, is a presumption that they after all set a high value upon reputation.

The All-seeing Eye of God beholds the many evils and great injustice which spring from bearing false witness against our neighbor; and because He put a special law against it in the Decalogue, we have all reason to conclude that the evils attending it are very hurtful and numerous, and that the crime itself is a very heinous sin, both against God and man.

This bearing of false witness may be committed in many ways, only a few of which we can notice. We at once see that all kinds of *lying*, *SLANDERING*, *tale-bearing*, *pernicious gossiping*, *busy tattling*, *perjury* and *evil speaking*, are strictly prohibited, because they are no less than bearing false witness. This law, like all the others, forbids the crime it refers to in the highest sense, so that the prohibition may embrace all its modifications, small and great. We have here, then, a law directly against accusing our neighbor falsely, in judgment, *i. e.*, swearing falsely to his prejudice in any sense whatever. Perjury, of course, is included in the third law of the First Table, because it is the taking of God's name in vain. But here it is specially prohibited, because it invariably inflicts very serious injuries upon our neighbor. We discover, then, that perjury is like adultery—a dark complication of many crimes in one. It treats the God of high heaven with the utmost irreverence, does violence to His truth, profanes His holy name, denies Him the awful attribute of Omniscience, and appeals to Him under oath, to bear witness to what is utterly false. It assails our neighbor's good name, property or life, as the case may be, and hence it may become a theft or a murder, as circumstances may permit—and even in the most trifling sense, it is a serious dereliction of that duty we owe our neighbor. Of perjury as a sin against God, we have spoken on a former occasion; we have also glanced at it as a crime against man. We will, therefore, pass from it and proceed to the consideration of some other kinds of false testimony, from which, perhaps, but few of ourselves can clear our skirts.

There is no judge of man so unmerciful and unjust as man himself. He is the most relentless censor, and unrighteous inquisitor of all. Although it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God; yet, in a sense, it is still more fearful to fall into the hands of man. David, in his wisdom, prayed against this cruel extremity. When man cannot or does not prosecute man with fire and sword, he will do so with that unruly member—the tongue; he will wound his neighbor with this two-edged sword. Let us keep false swearing altogether out of view; can we not with ease and certainty place a hand upon that heart which “deviseth wicked imaginations?” Are

the witnesses few, who go about with false reports, "who speak lies and sow discord among brethren?" No, my brethren, there are many who are exceedingly industrious, always in the most common yet the most fashionable branches of BEARING FALSE WITNESS, viz.: *Slander* and *Evil Speaking*. Slander should be the work of the devil alone. It is the RAISING of false reports against our neighbor, whom we know to be innocent of the things charged, with the diabolical design to blacken his good name, fair fame or character, and of injuring him either in person, property or welfare. It is slander also to RETAIL these evil reports, by the spreading of them to our neighbor's prejudice, when we know them to be false, or when we may have good reason to believe them so. There are other kinds or branches of this crime, all which tend to the same unjust and fiendish end. But the above is slander in the main.

In all communities, large as well as small, there is invariably a plentiful sprinkling of those pestilent arrows of society, who are, unfortunately, more busy about what their neighbors may think, say or do, than about their own lawful business. You must remember that this anxiety on their part, by no means arises from a desire to do good or prevent evil, but to have plausible opportunities to slander and defame character. This malignant propensity is an index to the heart in which it dwells. It putrefies the whole character, and makes it to stand out in bold relief among the pollutions of the earth, an utter abomination in the eye of God. Such men and women have been, in all ages of the world, viewed as great pests of society, and have been pronounced, very justly, the scourges of innocence.

The first part of the slanderer's barbarous trade is to asperse the actions of men, by attributing to them wrong motives and wicked ends, even when such actions in themselves are able to suffer the closest scrutiny. When we see a man so conducting himself as to give every fair and reasonable indication that he is influenced by good and proper motives, it is certainly slander, calumny or bearing false witness against him, to judge prejudicially of those motives, and to pronounce them selfish and impure. It is uncharitable to suspect them, but it is foolish willfully to misconstrue them. He only who has felt the wound of slander in this way, can appreciate its anguish. It is he who can understand its cruelty, injustice and malignity. It is much easier for a man to endure a misconstruction of his actions, than of the motives which may be actuating him. Actions may be injudicious, yet be the fruits of the purest motives; but impugn the motives, then the whole man is tainted—the prestige of character is gone. Have you not had such happen to you in your own experience in the world? When each motive was pure, each action, so far as you felt, was devoid of selfishness or any turpitude, did not then the slanderer make his onslaught, and cause you, in much sorrow and sickness of heart, to pronounce all men

liars? Few are they who have escaped the tongue of slander. It may be that many of ourselves even, must be engaged through life in hiding its ghostly scar from the eyes of men, although its wound may be healed. No matter how good a man or woman may be, no matter how pure and innocent the victim of calumny may be, slander only requires a specious pretext—a starting point, that it may bury its fangs deep in the flesh. The envious, and unbridled tongue only requires the faintest provocation, that it may wag with profligate malignity. A man or woman has only to make the slightest stumble or misstep, when all mercy and consideration are cast aside—the fat bulls of Bashan surround them. The busy mockers go to work with a hearty will, and the sword of defamation is immediately whetted. There are no pains taken to inquire into the cause of the crime, whatever it may be; no allowances made for human weaknesses; no mitigating circumstances whatever taken into account; no temptations placed upon the balance; the force of education and habit is villainously lost sight of; virtues are unsparingly hid away; all redeeming qualities are with the most barbarous design concealed; ignorance or thoughtlessness, youth or inexperience; in fact, all palliating circumstances are purposely passed over in dead silence. But the action or word which is the occasion of this slander, and which, after all, may have only the semblance of criminality, is greedily fastened upon, and made to stand out in the boldest relief before the eye of the world, to the great prejudice, nay, ruin of the slandered.

It is slander also, to call our neighbor by such names and epithets as would indicate that he has been guilty of saying or doing things which would not accord with a good reputation. There may be no direct charge brought in this way of bearing false witness, yet great harm may be done by the application of such names. This is a very common kind, and it is as cruel as any. We often see, that in the moment a man may become an object of envious hate, that he is called by many opprobrious names, which indirectly charge him with words and actions of which he was never guilty. In the strife of tongues, the clamor against him is so overwhelming, that he finds it a hopeless matter to stem the torrent. This is a subterfuge, resorted to very frequently by conclaves of men for political purposes, and sometimes by the private calumniator, who may have no other way to vent his rancor than in gross and uncharitable names. This is not a direct way of slandering or of misconstruing words and actions, but it is tantamount to either—its purposes and ends are the same, and its effects are equally mischievous. Men and women have been often so fairly prostrated in the dust by this kind of slander, that years of careful conduct and prudent walk were scarcely able to raise them up again.

There is such a thing as "*killing a man with little praise.*" This is scientific slandering. It hides a great deal of what ought to be praised,

and adds a great deal that ought not. The good word is buried in the bad. The praise is lost in the many significant "BUTS" and "IFS" which follow. It supports the lie with the aid of valueless truths, hiding certain circumstances which would reveal the whole truth, it takes pains only to take notice of just so many of the least praiseworthy, as will give a specious coloring to the intended slander. The light and shade of this artful defamation are so nicely touched off, as that the picture drawn is often not only mistaken for a time, but also for a very flattering likeness. It can maintain the confidence of friendship, while it is poisoning its very essentials. It has the smile, nay the tear of charity on its face, while it is clutching the dagger to deal an effective blow.

Slander may also be accomplished by the very many kinds of sly and dubious insinuations, which men who are given to irony employ, by cutting and suspicious inuendoes and cynical suggestions; by half explained hints, intentional equivocations, and the meaning "HUMS" and "HAS" which are such true conductors of distressing doubts and suspicion. A battery of intelligent looks and winks, the strange raising and lowering of the brows, certain expressions of countenance, work wonders in the way of scandal. Also curious intonations of the voice, peculiar accentuations and emphasizing of particular words, may be employed to convey sinister impressions of the victim of defamation. All these may be used effectually to turn a truth, stated in plain words, into a falsehood, or to convey a meaning contrary to that which the words of themselves would naturally carry with them, unless an air of mystery, irony or suspicion were added to them.

We will only mention another kind of scandal. It consists in fastening upon the faults and failings of our neighbor, and magnifying them in number and degree, and so speculating upon them as that they will turn out to be very prejudicial to the fair fame of our victims. A venial fault in this way may be made an enormous crime, and a mere indiscretion a very serious turpitude. A frailty of ignorance or inexperience, may be made to appear a wickedness of intention, or a mere thing of habit or carelessness the result of a bad heart or dark motive. This is imputing to the actions and intentions of our neighbor, things which have no existence in truth, but in the wanton malignity of the defamer's heart.

Evil speaking, though in one sense different from slander, is yet, in intention and effect, exactly the same as slander. It is the trade of the busy tale-bearer, who runs up and down with mischief-making stories. It is taking up reproach against our neighbor, and flying with it hither and thither. It is a revelation of hurtful and scandalous secrets—a breach of all confidence—an intrenchment upon all faith. It is backbiting with the tongue to the kindling of strife and enmity. It is the work of him "whose words are as wounds that go down into the uttermost parts of the

belly." Evil speaking is not exactly the coining of false reports, but the retailing of them, whether they be true or false. If we should repeat a story to him of whom it is told, for the purpose of correcting him or of putting him on his guard, it is neither scandal nor evil speaking; but should we run with such story from house to house, and from acquaintance to acquaintance, for the mere morbid pleasure of retailing an evil report, we at once become evil speakers, and the result of our action is defamation. If we should introduce these reports into our ordinary conversation, merely for the sake of having something to say, in order that pleasure may be afforded to inveterate gossip—if we tell it with that peculiar zest and satisfaction which at once betrays a purpose to injure or destroy the good name of our neighbor, our tongues become as burning coals, our lips as wood to fire, and we may be viewed as the most detestable, trifling, dangerous and unfaithful of all men who annoy society. Although evil speaking presupposes, in the main, the telling of what is true, yet it is as likely to spread the false as the true, because those given to it, seldom or never have the desire nor take the time to discriminate. But granting that it never spreads the false, yet it is a great crime to make a cruel and uncharitable use of our neighbor's secrets which may be trusted to our honor. It is a very malignant offence, both against God and man, because it brings needless hate and discord among His children, and then inflicts a great but causeless injury upon those whom we are commanded to love. But tale-bearing does by no means necessarily expose the truth, because it more frequently retails the false. If, then, it be a great sin to expose the faults of our neighbor needlessly, how much greater must the sin be when we give publicity to false reports, with no other design than that of assaulting the character of our neighbor when he is helpless. Slander may be compared to a scourge of scorpions, and evil speaking to a scourge of thrice knotted cords.

In whatever form or modification slander and evil speaking may present themselves, we must see them as the fruits of the worst passions and of the meanest and most debased hearts. The thief has necessity, or the strength of avarice to offer as an excuse for his crime. The murderer has the fire of passion or some biting outrage to plead for him. The adulterer and fornicator will point to temptation and their own weakness, as extenuations. The perjurer has bribery, or some other strong motive, to palliate his crime. But whence can the miserable slanderer, the silly tattler, the wanton gossip, the busy tale-bearer get their excuse? Surely not in that inherent meanness of heart, in that fiendish disposition, in that sleepless malignity of spirit which characterize them. These, so far from being excuses, are certainly aggravations. These mischief makers are far beneath honorable revenge, though not unworthy the blow of justice. The viper is crushed in

disgust, not in honest indignation. Some people have a taste for the very marvellous, some for the horrible, some for the bustle of fashion, and some for the wearisome strife of life, but there is a numerous class who could not get comfortably through this world at all, unless they have their neighbors' characters delineated to their satisfaction. They have a decided relish for defamation; it is the only thing that will excite either their interest or curiosity, or relieve the PRETTY languor of their uselessness. Therefore we cannot much wonder that many an INTERESTING and talkative man has found the key to fashionable society, buried in a budget of scandal—that many an airy and dangerous woman can find no other path to her seat among what is called the REFINED, but her ruinous tattle. We would certainly be apt to suppose, that such characters would prove harmless from their very silliness and worthlessness, but these are the very things which make them to be feared, because they are listened to with attention by those who are as silly, but who have the power to do much harm. The serious slanderer will naturally bring very grave charges at once, and thereby arouse the inquiry and opposition of his victim. Neither his charges nor himself can remain long in ambush. But the trifling calumniator will nibble the flesh from the bones of his victim, speck by speck, without causing much pain, until the stout man becomes a very skeleton. He is more apt to be treated with contempt than anything else, while doing his mischief, until a long list of trifling charges are disseminated abroad, and until the minds of a multitude of friends and acquaintances are fairly poisoned. To counteract all this, and to clear it up in detail, would, in all likelihood, be utterly beyond the time, energy, courage and tact of the man thus assailed. The chairs around some tea boards, may, indeed, be compared to so many judgment seats, whereon are seated, not only self-sufficient reorganizers of society, but also its severe censors and judges. In such social gatherings, we may meet with the unappeasable philanthropist, who wants to do good to the few at the expense of the many—to bring about good by doing evil. We may also meet with the discontented cynic, who can discover no good anywhere or in any person, but in the place where he happens to be sitting, and in the persons to whom he may be talking; when he is alone, he can only see good in himself. We may also meet with the inveterate gossip and tale-bearer, who would sink into the darkest shade of insignificance, if there were no story to tell or if he had nobody to defend. These judges have no fee or salary beyond the luxury of mischief making. Without the consent of any jury, the victim is condemned, whether innocent or guilty, and in due course of time he is sure to suffer the penalty. In this way hundreds of characters are seriously injured. We do not mean by instancing the tea table, that it is the only place where this thing is done. We have our vendors of scandal in almost all social

gatherings, and also in the privacy of the closet. Every stitch in some sewing circles is an index to some delineation of character. There are regular establishments—wholesale and retail dealers in it. We are pestered with the industrious runner and the mean peddler of it. We have our eaves-droppers and listeners; we have our formal callers, who call merely to discover, or learn, or to exchange. All these see things which none else could see, but those blessed with double sight. They hear words spoken which were never uttered at all, or were spoken in harmless conversation. They are very miracles of double sight and double hearing. Nothing very mysterious or marvellous in the conduct of others can possibly escape them. The most private affairs of the most private and distant people must be discovered by them. How people live—what are their means—what their parents were—how they were brought up—what they have been doing and saying for years past, and what are their plans for years to come. They have many family and individual secrets to tell, and they tell them in the strictest confidence, in which, indeed, they give and receive all secrets. They don't want *their story* to go any further, yet they tell it wherever they go, with the same charitable injunction to secrecy. But enough of them.

There are a few other things I must refer to here, which are certainly bearing false witness. To bribe a witness to swear falsely, to encourage him or intimidate him to do so in any way; to confuse him, by artful pre-cognition, while on oath; to suborn him in any way whatever, or to willfully falsify his testimony, is in the sight of God, to partake of the crime which the text prohibits. It is, in intention and effect, not only a perjury but a modification of slander.

Forgery may be made another way of bearing false witness, as it is a mode of effectual theft. Criminal, injurious and libelous documents may be so written, or counterfeited, as to be mistaken for the work of our neighbor, on whom of course, the punishment, shame and injury consequent on such writings, must be visited, although perfectly innocent. The same result may be effected by the forging of seals and signets, or any other thing which might not only wrong our neighbor in his property, but also in his reputation, by fastening crime upon him. This may be made a very sure and insidious way to destroy fair fame.

Rash or unguarded speech, although not uttered with any intention of doing wrong, may, still in effect be a very dangerous kind of false witnessing. Those who may hear our hasty and injudicious expressions with regard to our neighbors, are, generally speaking, uncharitable enough to put the worst construction upon them, and to draw the worst conclusions from them. While a man may be only giving expression to a little ill temper or peevishness against an acquaintance, with no intention whatever of in-

juring him, his listeners will be sure to let his words have their full weight; and then the man spoken against, is sure to have the benefit of the worst meaning.

Hurried, unstudied and careless conclusions may become slander against our neighbor. To arrive hastily at a conclusion concerning a man's words or actions, is often to come to a very wrong and prejudicial one. Hence, we may unjustly be ascribing to that man, motives and other things which would be destructive of his character. This may be partially excusable on the ground that the injury done is not intended; but it is, after all, not so very excusable, since the carelessness and haste manifested, very nearly come up to the criminal intention.

The receiving of slanders and calumnies—believing them without proper and worthy testimony; encouraging evil speaking by evil credulity; showing attention to evil report and to the busy bodies who carry it, may all be reduced or referred to bearing false witness. Also employing, tempting in any way, bribing or seeking any one to speak falsely of our neighbor, may be reduced to the same crime. In fact, anything and everything, which will in anywise tend to injure any one in this manner, is either expressly or tacitly prohibited by the text.

We will now conclude by glancing at the ruinous tendencies of this crime, and then at the positive duties implied in the prohibition of the law. Good and bad are alike the victims of this crime. It makes no distinctions whatever. All men are subject to the taint of its desolating breath. The weak and the strong; the timid and the bold; the delicate and the shameless; the learned and the ignorant; the holy and the profane; all, all are assailed with the same unsparing malignity. It is an amusement for a fiendish and abandoned heart, for its object is to destroy whatever is splendid in fortune, whatever is cheering in hope, whatever is honorable in position, and whatever is sweet in innocence. It is a cold, barbarous and cowardly way of ruining an absent neighbor in the thing he holds most sacred. It destroys the peace of many innocent women, and drives those who may have stumbled, into despair, from which they will scarcely ever recover, unless some potent arm be reached forth to save. It crushes and disgusts many a noble hearted man, who would be useful to his kind, a brilliant ornament to society and an honor to his country. It comes between man and wife, and transforms the hearth into one continual scene of recrimination. It disturbs society to its very foundations, sowing furious discord and bitter contention whenever its voice is heard. It is a base duplicity, a fiendish envy which deceives with a smile, while stinging the very vitals of its victim. It is the cause of numberless sorrows; and the goad which drives men to many dreadful crimes. It cuts asunder the tenderest ties of life, and turns hope into a desolation. It subverts all friendship,

robs it of all its expectations, and poisons all social intercourse. Its pleasure is to ruin all amity, placability and love, and to see bitter strife in full blast. It has no eye to pity or charity ; but tiger-like, it sports in the work of death as an amusement. Its very smile is a dangerous mockery, and its very praises and caresses are more deadly than the breath of the coursing plague. The poison of asps accompanies its fulsome laudations ; and its approaches are worse than a sweeping condemnation. Its meaning looks are instinct with hate and danger, and its very motion and gesture is an instrument of exquisite torture. Its very silence is as guilty and bitter as its words are burning and blasting. Its main object is to impeach the purity of innocence, to dim whatever outshines itself in reputation, position, power, talent, wealth and comfort. Of all envy it is the most debased ; of all avarice it is most gripping and cowardly. It is impossible for it to spare its neighbor in any condition of life, for it hates to see him good, happy, prosperous or comfortable ; yet it fears to fight him in open day. It ravishes all the treasures of humanity, and levels all its most splendid structures. Its breath leaves a stain behind it, which the tears of penitence cannot wash out, nor the eye of sorrow ever obliterate. It is as unforgiving as hell, and more implacable than the hyena.

Ye judges of men—ye censors of fellow worms, who hath given you the liberty or the right to deal out this inhumanity ? Who art thou that judgest another ? You have no right even to condemn the guilty, for there is only *One* that judgest—God. What though your brother fall—what though your sister stumble, is it yours to condemn and punish ? But if they stand, how dare you, in the face of heaven, drag them into undeserved condemnation ? Our lips should be fast closed against our brother even when guilty ; our hearts should open in pity to him, when, like the prodigal he returns penitent.

Probably to talk of forgiveness to these vile Pharisees in society, is a mere waste of time ; we will therefore call their attention to something else. Thou self-righteous hypocrite—thou white-washed sepulchre, know you not that your wicked assumption, your great cruelty, your abominable pride in thus judging your fellow men, are much more hateful in the eyes of God than the real or imaginary sin with which you charge your brother ? Know you not that your own very crime in this, is the very thing that made hell, and brought sorrow, death and corruption into the world ? Censorious one, unless you were guilty yourself you would not accuse others—your conduct is the subterfuge of guilt. You accuse to escape accusation. You direct attention to your neighbor that you yourself may be hid. You have an interest, nay, a pride in bringing down all around you to your own level, with the hope that your own shame may be concealed. You have the fiendish design to keep the fallen one down, that yourself may be suffered

to stand. Your reputation depends upon the vices and follies of your neighbor, and your hopes come from his ruin. We know your vain subterfuge. Should your guilt be hid from men, it is well for you to remember that there is a day coming, in which justice will be done you ; wherein that pity which you so often denied your brother will be denied to yourself. A day in which all your high opinions of yourself, and your low opinions of your fellow men must be changed—then your insolence, pride and cruelty will cease. The angels themselves do not think themselves pure enough to become the judges and censors of men. Are you then cleaner than the heavens ? is your face brighter than those of the seraphim, which are covered before the throne ? Is your life so immaculate ; your virtue so dogged, so pure, so ineffable as that they abide the full blaze of eternal light, and the scrutiny of that eye which pierces the reins of all hearts ? “Thou superb Pharisee,” just attend to the call within your own bosom, and it will take you before another tribunal besides that of your own pride and self-righteousness. Before that bar, all your mock indignation, all your counterfeit contempt for your neighbor, will not sustain you against the conviction, that the penitent adulterer and fornicator are better than you. All the loud smiting upon the breast, all the smooth oil of your hypocrisy, all your artificial self-denial and virtues, all your miserable paraded charities and pompous vanity will only add to your confusion and dismay. Should the world greet thee with Rabbi, Rabbi ; should the highest seat in the synagogue be swept and garnished for you ; and should the market place move with respect at your approach, your guilt will certainly come to light—you are only a miserable hypocrite after all. When you will be called upon to appear before the throne of retribution ; when eternal flames will dry up the sea and lick out the stars from the firmament, your righteousness will be fairly tested—but it will fail. Your eyes will then be opened to the blackness of your crimes ; and that arm upon which you so long leaned will drop nerveless by your side—then you will cry for that mercy which you invariably withheld from your neighbor. As you deem yourself above mercy in this world, on account of your much righteousness and manifold virtues, you will not be accounted an object of mercy in the next world. Your barbarity in refusing the tears of a fallen brother or sister here, will cause your own to fall throughout eternity in liquid drops of fire. Your cruelty in despising the penitence of a broken and contrite heart here, will cause your own to become a prey in eternity to the most frantic grief and despair. God Himself receives the tears of penitence ; and what He receives, no man can despise without giving great offence. He loves the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart—He listens attentively to the half smothered sigh ; and He hears readily the timid but fervent prayer. He never quenches the smoking flax nor does he break the bruised reed.

"Thou proud Pharisee," dare not then to do what the Judge eternal does not do; never dare to crush what God would both in justice and mercy sustain. Let the returning children of sin be contented with this—let them be reassured—let the sigh of unrequited sorrow be hushed, for the Pharisee will soon cease to judge; and then all will be peace. Let no depth of crime or shame deter any one from throwing himself into the arms of Almighty God, because He is a God of mercy—He is no Pharisee.

Now, my brethren, this law, by forbidding all manner of bearing false witness, commands certain duties which are the opposites of the things prohibited. We are then to speak of our neighbors in all places and at all times with truth and charity, religiously avoiding whatever would needlessly injure his good name or defame him in any way. We are to so order our speech with respect to his words and actions, as that no false impressions can be conveyed concerning them. We are neither to add to nor subtract from them, in order that they may not be mistaken or misconstrued. And even when we are telling his actions and repeating his words as they were really done or spoken, we must not, by any trick of delivery or peculiar use of our countenance, or tone of the voice, attempt to change their meaning or intention. We are to be careful and charitable in receiving reports, and to be fair and honest when it is necessary to give any. We are to sustain our neighbor's reputation as much as possible on every occasion, making all just allowances for faults committed, and giving all the praise when such is just and expedient. When we cannot excuse or extenuate, we must not aggravate—in such a case we should rather be silent. But if we cannot hold our tongues, we should use them in the lovely and heavenly exercise of casting over their "faults and foibles" the ever blessed "mantle of charity and Christian forbearance."

SERMON XIV.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

TEXT—Exodus xx, 17: “*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.*”

THIS great law is a recapitulation, as it were, of all the foregoing duties laid down in the Decalogue with respect to our neighbor. It comprehends all the duties of the Second Table, by legislating against what is the source of all law-breaking on the part of man, viz.: all *inordinate desires and passions*, all *envy* and *covetousness*. We know that it is the inward motive that actuates man, either to virtue or vice, and resolves him either to the path of duty or of disobedience. Thus this law being one for the regulation and proper restraining of our passions and desires, may be compared to the broad and solid foundation upon which the sublime structure of the Second Table is reared. It is the one ineffable beam of divine wisdom, in which the others all but lose themselves. The most simple amongst us must know, that the surest way to avoid theft and all kinds of dishonesty, is to conquer our covetousness and overcome our strong inclinations to acquisitiveness. If a man subdue his desire to become hastily rich, he will deal honestly with all men—he will be completely armed against disobedience to the law respecting theft. It is very evident, also, that the most effectual way to arm ourselves against the crime of adultery, is to subdue any passion which desires it, and to abstain from lusting after that which we cannot possibly have, without offending the laws of heaven and earth. It is also very manifest that murder would never blacken the history of man, if Christian philanthropy were to be properly and universally practised. If no man would desire the hurt, destruction or death of his fellow man, no innocent blood could cry from the ground for vengeance. If anger, strife, hatred and malice take not hold upon the human heart, then all quarrelling, slandering, evil speaking, injustice and blood-shedding would disappear from the earth. What force of wisdom, then, do we discover in this summing up of the Decalogue? What a graphic and fearfully comprehensive

rule of life is here presented to us. No wonder, my brethren, that terrific fulminations should call the attention of the world to it. No wonder that the people should remove in fear from the foot of Sinai, whose sides the lightnings of heaven plowed, as this eternal law was delivered to them. No wonder that the trumpet of God awakened the echoes of the wilderness, that the voice of this law should be heard unto the utmost parts of the earth.

For a clearer understanding of what this law prohibits, we will consider briefly a portion of the history of Ahab, one of Samaria's kings. There was one Naboth, a Jezreelite, who had a vineyard in Jezreel, hard by the palace of the king. A law which then existed among the Israelites, forbade them to dispose of an inheritance, either by gift or by sale. This fact Ahab knew, or ought to have known, and this was Naboth's answer to the king on his refusal to part with it. Although Ahab possessed a kingdom, yet we may see in this his demand, the strong, furious and inconsiderate desires of envy and covetousness. He was not contented with a kingdom—he must grasp a poor man's inheritance in the very face of God's law and of his own nation. He at first seems to have offered an equivalent to the Jezreelite, which we may think reasonable enough, but the reasonableness or fairness of the offer is at once destroyed by the avaricious spirit it betrayed and by the great sin it involved. Naboth refused his overtures, on the ground that it was unlawful for him to part with the inheritance, which was entailed upon himself and family by his ancestors. The conscientious refusal of Naboth to come to any terms in the matter with Ahab, instead of warning the king to desist from his *unlawful desires*, actually insulted his pride, and threw him into a state of gloom and despondency. His covetousness became furious, and his insulted pride drove him into such a state of mind as that he refused to eat. His spirit was sad because its desire was refused. Now, you will observe, that up to this point there was nothing in this transaction on the part of Ahab sinful, but his covetous desire and the request which it dictated. We can here discover the madness of avarice, as exemplified in the case before us. What an effectual destroyer of contentment it is! What an unhappy and dangerous temper it gives a man! We can also see that all the honors, and possessions, and glory which a human being can possibly enjoy, cannot satisfy covetousness, nor quiet to any degree its everlasting cravings. Jezebel, his wife, came to him and said, by way of comfort or encouragement, "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." What, could not a king be comforted unless he obtained possession of a poor man's vineyard? hath the honesty of a poor subject put a king from his food? A king is as weak, mean and despicable, under the influence of avarice or

covetousness, as the veriest beggar. It is most probable that Ahab knew what means his wife contemplated to employ in the accomplishment of what he so much desired, even before "Naboth was set on high among the people." At all events, he approved of them after they were employed, which was tantamount to the same thing in the sight of God. The infamous Jezebel contrived the destruction of the poor owner of the vineyard, that Ahab's covetousness might be satisfied. And, immediately upon the murder being committed, the king seizes upon the coveted inheritance—he takes possession of the advantages of crime. Here, then, we have Ahab plunged into the two remaining crimes of covetousness, viz.: the employment of unlawful means to gain the objects of his *unlawful desires*, and the TAKING AND KEEPING in possession that which was UNLAWFULLY DESIRED and UNLAWFULLY PROCURED. The text prohibits positively the first step in the king's crime in this transaction, which was unlawful desire; the next two it forbids by implication, which were the using of unlawful means to accomplish such a desire, and then the unlawful taking or keeping of the thing thus procured by such means.

But now it may be asked, what made the king's desire unlawful; or what is that which may make any desire unlawful? In the case of Ahab, it is clear that he wished to possess something which the law of God could not suffer him to possess LAWFULLY, therefore the wish to do so was wicked, *i. e.*, covetous. He desired to own an inheritance which Naboth could not, on any account, part with and be innocent. Just in the same way may any desire of ours be identified with Ahab's covetousness. A desire that is lawful can generally be accomplished by the employment of legitimate means, but one that is not, cannot, by any lawful means, because all that are employed will be vicious, inasmuch as the desire itself is so. For example—one man may desire another man's wife, but the man whose wife she is, cannot part with her, because the law of God prohibits him, and the woman so desired cannot render herself up without an infringement of the same law. Any desire, then, that will put a man to employ unrighteous means, and form deliberate plots and plans to get possession of what his neighbor cannot fairly, justly, conveniently, or innocently part with, may be resolved into covetousness. Any desire that will so conquer a man as to make him use criminal and covert ends to obtain what is his neighbor's, without the consent or knowledge of that neighbor, is a simple unqualified act of covetousness. The desire of Ahab would be quite innocent if he could obtain the vineyard by lawful, fair and honest means, but in the moment he consented to the employment of the horrid means recorded to his disgrace, to gain his point, that moment he stood guilty of the crime expressly forbidden in the text, which, in his case, implied murder and theft. The prophet of God simply asks him, "hast thou killed and also taken

possession?" He is not charged with covetousness, you will observe, until he employed or consented to employ undue means to effect his purpose. If he had rested with Naboth's refusal, and so overcome the desire, he could be charged with no crime whatever. But having suffered his desire to master him, it became furious and perfectly unreasonable, so that when fair means failed him, he sought foul, which showed his desire to be as deeply criminal as the fruit of it was cruel and bloody.

The law before us by no means supposes, that every strong desire, even when it has something unlawful for its object, is a crime worthy of punishment. There are men born into the world, prone to very many burning and almost ungovernable passions, in whom desire is inconsiderate and vehement. Some men are naturally avaricious, others amorous, others blood-thirsty, and so on. In the bosoms of such men, at times, of course, there will arise spontaneously, such inordinate desires as are most natural to their different temperaments and dispositions. But surely the all just God cannot bring them into condemnation for that which they cannot help. Such men are rather to be approved than condemned, if they give evidence that they manage, for the sake of conscience, to suppress all such violent passions. "He that overcometh himself, is greater than him who taketh a city." But what is the evidence, both to God, themselves and their neighbor, that they do conquer such intemperate desires? They do not proceed to the using of any means so that the objects of their desires may be gained. The absence of any action on their part to effect this, is surely more than a presumption that the ENDEAVOR is wanting also, and the absence of all endeavor is also an evidence, that no unlawful resolutions have been made to satisfy their passion. They are, therefore, not to be condemned for the various inordinate desires which spontaneously rise in their hearts, because they rise superior to such, inasmuch as they take care not to satisfy them. There is less or more of an evil principle in every man that is born of woman—it is given to us as an inheritance. To say that this is given to us by God, is to say that God tempts his creatures with evil. God tempts no man, and every man is thus tempted by what St. James calls "*his own lusts*." Now, although temptation is an evil, yet it is no sin: so that a man may be tempted by strong desires, and yet commit no sin. The sin consists, not in the temptation, but in being drawn away by it. Lust may conceive, yet it may be prevented from giving birth to sin. No sin being brought forth, sin cannot be finished, and, therefore, there can be no death or condemnation. It is here where Ahab sinned. His lust conceived; he suffered it to give birth to sin, and having finished the sin, the dogs were to lick his blood where they had licked the blood of the murdered Naboth. We are not charged with sin because the devil and the world are temptations to us, but we are condemned if we are overcome by them. The same

may be said of the infirmities of the flesh and the lusts thereof. The mere fact of our being subject to them, does not, at once, constitute us sinners. It is, and will be as long as we are in the flesh, our natural condition to be less or more subject to evil desires; yet since we have the power and the means, through our Lord and Saviour to resist and overcome them, we are guilty before heaven the moment we are ensnared. Man will be man until his tenement of flesh falls in ruins around him. While he lives, there will be a war going on in his members—he will be ever carrying about with him a body of death. Notwithstanding all this, he may be spotlessly pure and innocent in the sight of God, that is, as washed in and bought by the blood of the Eternal Lamb. Though this war will ever be going on between the spirit and the flesh, we are neither to lose our courage nor abate our vigilance, because God promises us strength to overcome at the last, and to sharpen our watchfulness, by giving us a due and timely appreciation of the danger we are frequently in from ourselves. Those of us whose desires are naturally weak and languid, or are mollified and chastened down by painful and constant discipline, ought to be very thankful because the battle is all but gained. If nature, at our birth, has chained down the legion within us—if our temperaments and dispositions are by nature of that calm, easy and even kind which will suffer us to glide through life and our duties, rather than struggle through them, let us really feel grateful for such a great blessing to Him who is the “giver of every good and perfect gift.” If our desires *have* been inordinate, immoderate and furious, and are now brought into subjection to the spirit, let us again rejoice, for it is still the great goodness of God. But if the giants of our bosoms are yet awake, in all their tremendous strength and vigor, let us by no means despair, for if we do not give way to them nor foster them in any way, we *SHALL* NOT; a great victory will soon be at hand, and the reward of him who resisteth much temptation and overcometh many strong enemies, will be glorious indeed. The Saviour Himself underwent a bitter conflict alone in the wilderness. It was a dark, inscrutable, fearful, terrible struggle. It partook largely of that one which dipped his vesture in blood. But who can blame Him for being thus tempted? Will not rather angels and even devils give Him praise for coming out from the awful battle victorious and unscathed? Heaven, earth and hell must ever give Him the glory of an Almighty Conqueror. He indeed was tempted by another, and not by Himself, but we are tempted by ourselves. This shows us that all our evil desires spring from a principle in ourselves, which is the same as that which governed him who tempted our Lord. How often does the dreadful experience of this truth crush the heart of the Christian, and bow down his wearied spirit into the very dust of despondency. He has to cry continually in disquietude of soul, “O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver

me from this body of death?" He has always to reiterate a truth, which is at once LAMENTABLE and BLESSED, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." A truth lamentable, because the flesh is weak in the way of duty—blessed because the spirit is willing, but being willing it will be strengthened.

There are some who covet what is another's, even when they do not employ unlawful means to obtain what they desire. We are told that "who-soever looketh upon a woman to LUST after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." It is manifest that our Saviour meant that the man so desiring a woman, as that he would commit adultery if he had the means and opportunity to do so, the same is really not only guilty, in the sight of God, of breaking the last commandment, but also the one with respect to adultery. A man may look upon a woman, *i. e.*, he may desire her, but if he rise superior to that desire, he has committed no sin, in that he looks not upon her to lust after her. But should a man look so as to lust, then he is guilty, although the means and opportunity may be wanting to him to punish the crime. The same may be said with respect to anything else that is our neighbor's. A man may desire his neighbor's property to such an extent, as that he would not hesitate to use unlawful means to obtain it if such were in his power. But should he desire, for instance, his neighbor's house, and so bound and determine himself as not to employ any undue means, even should he never obtain it, the simple desire in itself is not a sin. Yet if his desire were to lead him to form or make wicked determinations and resolutions for the purpose of obtaining it, he will be guilty before God of covetousness, and also of theft, even should an opportunity never offer itself to carry out these resolutions. But should a man hate his brother, and desire his destruction, the case is materially altered. This is a kind of desire in itself which at once infringes upon all the duties we owe our neighbor, although in one sense it may be referred to envy or covetousness. The text does not specially legislate for such desires, because the preceding laws of the Second Table have already pointed to them. It more particularly refers to such desires as are in their first motions mere temptations, but which become sinful as soon as they are fostered and obeyed. The moment a man desires the destruction of a brother, that moment, in the sight of God, he becomes a murderer, should he never have formed a single resolution to take his life. He may be prevented from gratifying his hate or malice, by an endless concurrence of circumstances, in which his own personal safety and interest are involved. But if these were removed, he would no doubt become a man of blood. Even hate is a passion which is not sinful in itself when it is directed to proper objects, but when misused, misdirected, or when it is allowed to give birth to sinister desires with respect to our neighbor's life or property, then there is guilt. All our

passions are innocent, so long as they are properly used and restrained ; they are given to us just like many other blessings which we abuse. It is exactly so with our desires. When a desire is directed to an improper object, it becomes unlawful if not overcome. If it be so inordinate as to put us to wicked contrivances, or to the forming of unlawful resolutions, or to the doing of endeavors and actions which are forbidden, then, indeed, the desire becomes immediately unlawful. This, certainly, should warn us to be careful in our desires ; to see that they would not overpower or drive us to imitate, to any extent, the cruelty or covetousness of Ahab. A desire may be as sweet to us as a right eye or a right arm, yet if it begin to offend, it is better that we pluck it out or cut it off, ere it corrupt and destroy the whole body. We are told, in the forcible words of inspiration, that "it is more profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

Now, my brethren, as we understand somewhat the spirit of the summing up of the Decalogue, we will say a few words concerning the tendencies of the crime forbidden therein. Whatever crime you point me to, I say there is the result of abused passion and desire. There is nothing among men to be so highly prized as liberty, and there is nothing so great as liberty, as the emancipation of a man from the slavery of his own passions—this is the very essence of liberty. Power, glory and riches, are not to be so much desired on account of themselves, as on account of the great good they might accomplish. When they are desired for personal aggrandizement, ease, luxury and splendor, the purpose of them is completely defeated, and the desire of them is sure, at last, to resolve itself into covetousness. It is the selfish and inordinate desire of these, that gives birth to so much vice, shame and sorrow, in this world ; it is this, to a very great extent, that bars the "inhumanity of man to man" with such cruelty and meanness, and fills the world with crime in its endless varieties and shades. Every man seems to think it the end and purpose of his being, to defend himself against the avarice of his fellows ; to surround himself with security from the uncertain fortunes of this life, so that he may pass through it in ease and voluptuousness. And not only does he think it his duty thus to defend himself, but also that he may be so defended, to heap wrong upon wrong, and injustice upon injustice, until the means of it be secured. By a kind of compulsion or necessity, he seems to be drawn to this course of life by the condition of the world in which we live, and the proneness within himself to put a high estimate upon what is external and perishable. Temporal things are, indeed, to receive their due consideration, but this consideration is to be carefully bounded and watched, because in the moment it absorbs us, our duties will be lost sight of and crime will soon be sown broadcast. A man's desires should look to what is of this world, to riches and to their

personal advantages, with extreme caution, ere he will come to love and pursue them for themselves, and not for the liberality and beneficence in which they might be employed. The mere desire to acquire wealth, influence and fame is honorable in itself, but only honorable so long as it is properly and legitimately controlled, or so long as it has an eye to the well-being, not only of the individual desiring, but also to that of his neighbor. When it becomes entirely selfish, it soon resolves itself into that insatiable avarice or covetousness of which the text speaks. When, then, a desire so overcomes a man as to make him lose all consideration of his neighbor, where is the guarantee against wrong and injustice? When a man is subjugated by fear, what can be trusted to his bravery? When a man is enslaved by pleasure, what can be trusted to his fidelity and industry? So, then, when a man is shut up to self, and ruled by covetous desires and the passion of acquisitiveness, what can be trusted to his honor and honesty? Nothing! He will, as a matter of course, use all fair and foul means within his reach to gain the object of his desires or lusts, whatever they may be. There is nothing that will deter him from cutting his way through law and justice to those objects, but OTHER SELFISH DESIRES AND MOTIVES. If there were no danger to HIMSELF in murder, he would be guilty of that crime, that he might be satisfied. If there were no danger to HIMSELF in robbery and theft, he would rob and steal, that he might acquire. He will only be just when he is compelled, and even then he will be sorry and unhappy. He can only SPARE through fear, and GIVE only when the calls of a necessary expedience are made upon him. We have only to look calmly on Ahab, that we may fully comprehend the fearful danger, and misery; and shocking tendencies of an avaricious and covetous disposition. Ahab was powerful—he governed a kingdom, therefore he had the means to consummate his wickedness. The same temper makes Ahabs of all men who are governed by it, although all men may not have the same power, means or opportunity to show themselves out as he had. Large possessions, and great riches, and much power could not appease the avarice of the king; nor, indeed, could these satisfy ours if we are become its slaves. The more a desire is pampered, the more imperious does it become; the oftener the cravings of avarice are responded to, the louder and more clamorous its calls become. Ahab, a little before the murder and robbery of Naboth, was delivered from a famine, and from the terrors of a war with Syria. The nation which a little ago was sinking beneath the scourge of want, was now relieved; the throne which was tottering beneath the blows of Benhadad, was preserved once again to the tyrant Ahab. He could now rule in peace. But was he satisfied? No! Avarice ruled him, and made him wretched even in prosperity. A poor vineyard arouses his base cupidity, and for that miserable possession he became a murderer and a thief. See

how discontented and wretched it made himself; see how it banished from his bosom all sense of justice, and honor, and all feelings of mercy; see how it stripped him of all dignity, magnanimity and wisdom, and filled his bosom with relentless ferocity and malignity; see how it blinded him to the enormity of crime and to the blackness of ingratitude, and see how it made of a king a bloody villain, and of a man a merciless and implacable fiend. See again how it stained the earth with innocent blood, and robbed the poor of the gifts of God; see how it gave swiftness of foot to the sons of Belial to bear false witness, and how it caused a whole city to partake in the crime of the murderer. And, my brethren, is the history of Ahab alone on the annals of the world? No, no; we see on the face of every age of the world, the selfsame fruits of avarice and covetousness. We see it now—we see it here! Go ask that ragged and forlorn man, whose pale visage betokens biting poverty and unwitnessed destitution, why he is so sad and melancholy? and he will tell you that an Ahab has despoiled him of his inheritance, and thrust him forth to the cold mercies of an un pitying world. Come to the lonely widow, and ask her why are her orphans without food and shelter? and she will tell you that a covetous Ahab came and not only deprived her of her Naboth, but also of the little vineyard which would give her bread. Stop that fatherless and motherless child, who shrinks from the wintry wind, and ask why is his bosom uncovered to the storm—why are his cold feet unshod, and why is he hungry? Ask him where is his home and where the little inheritance which should feed, clothe and sustain him? and he will tell you that a proud and lordly Ahab robbed him of all, and left him alone to all the bitterness of want and the ills of poverty. Step into that squalid household, where the damp chill of beggary and hunger is shed alike upon father, mother and child, and ask why this want, why this cold desolation, this sorrow and these tears? ask why are they so thin, and wan, and wasted; why do the rains of heaven drop down upon their unsheltered heads, and the bleak winds murmur over the cold hearth; ask why that infant cries to its helpless mother in the pangs of hunger; why that icy tear upon the sunken cheek of the mother, and why that settled gloom upon the wrinkled brow of the agitated father? They will answer that the spoiler came and robbed—that a Christian Ahab came and pitilessly despoiled them of their little inheritance. Come to that solitary grave, ask who lies there? Read the short history recorded on the white stone, or listen to the tale of blood, the burden of which sleeps in that untimely grave; ask whose hand struck the blow, or by whose means did the murdered one come to his end? The answer will be, that an avaricious Ahab had to commit murder before he could possess and enjoy the convenient vineyard. Then ask that father or mother, whose form is bent beneath the weight of years and a load of grief, why are these con-

tinual tears and sobs? you will receive for an answer that the contrivances of a Jezebel, the malignity of an Ahab, and the perjury of the sons of Belial have deprived them, either of a daughter to satisfy the lust of a libertine, or of a son to gain the object of the avaricious man's desire.

My brethren, how exceedingly foolish it is to covet or envy what is another's. It is sure to render us discontented with our own state, whatever it may be. If "a contented mind be a continual feast," how much do we lose by coveting? or how much do we gain when our desires are gratified? Unjust gains never come up to our expectations. What did Ahab gain after he took possession of the vineyard? Nothing; but he lost all. When the prophet of God met him, just in the act of taking possession, he abandoned himself to the greatest terror, because he anticipated his doom. What was done in his case, must be done in that of every covetous man. "There is nothing new under the sun"—"the thing that hath been, is that which shall be." If Ahab found no comfort or satisfaction in the commission of iniquity, depend upon it we never will, or else something new must happen under the sun—or "the thing that hath been, is not the thing" that is "or shall be." Did you ever see a covetous man, whose "eyes were satisfied with seeing," or whose "ears were filled with hearing?" What, may I ask you, are all those things which we so much desire, such as riches, influence, power, splendor and fame? Are they not, in very truth, the blandishments, deceits and frauds of fickle fortune, which cheat us in possessing, and perish from us in the using? They, indeed, take a strong hold upon the mean and grovelling heart, and they dazzle the careless and inconsiderate eye, but after all, experience shows that they are mere impositions, mere shadows which will not abide the touch, and which turn to ashes at the heart's desire. Think not that the rich and pompous are at the climax of their wishes; think not that every blank of the heart is filled. Possessions may ornament life, but they can never soften its realities or blunt its thorns. Riches, for a time, may cast a halo of evanescent glory around life—they may astonish the vulgar and awe down the indigent and unexperienced, but to the man of solitude and calm reflection—to the man who seeks eternal happiness, and is in search of true wisdom, they are a weight instead of a blessing; he would scorn to droop his upward pinions to pick up tinsel which can only glitter in the sunshine, but which cannot be distinguished from any other lustreless tinsel in the dark hour of trial.

We do not take here an opportunity to disclaim against the vanity or advantages of this world's good things, merely because these things are beyond our reach—we are not angry with them because we cannot get them. Some are in the habit of doing so, but their idle declamations are not preaching but prating. We would only impress upon you, that they cannot make you as happy as you think they would, and that, therefore,

you should not allow yourselves to be carried away by coveting them. The sentiments of a great philosopher concerning avarice or covetousness, will not be out of place here: "To me, avarice seems not so much a vice as a deplorable piece of madness. The opinions of theory and positions of men, are not so void of reason as is their practised conclusions. Some have held that the snow is black, that the earth moves, that the soul is air, fire, water, but all this is philosophy, and there is no delirium, if we do but speculate the folly and indisputable dotage of avarice to that subterraneous idol and God of the earth." Either this great man must have been in his dotage when he wrote the above, or the covetous man must be a fool or madman. We grant that it is very praiseworthy and most lawful to take advantage of God's goodness, when he allows us to acquire the comforts, nay the luxuries of life, in order that the asperities and difficulties of it may be somewhat ameliorated. To love oneself, is a primary law of nature, and no one can infringe upon it without doing great violence. Hence, as another celebrated writer says: "We ought not to neglect to acquire any good, except the possession of it would be incompatible with that of a greater good, and we ought not to consent to suffer any ills, except the ending of them would prevent greater ills." By this, you will observe, that no good can come from covetousness, for all the advantages which it can possibly bestow, are incompatible with other greater advantages which pertain to eternity. The fruits of dishonesty, however much they may benefit us here, will bring upon us the sentence of Ahab in eternity. We are, again, rather to suffer the ills of that state in which God has placed us in this world, in order that we may not suffer here and in eternity, the greater ills which covetousness would certainly entail upon us. Go and ask the very possessors of those things which are the objects of our inordinate desires—let the things be as fascinating as may be—these very men will tell you, that a few only add but little to their happiness, and that the majority of them are truly what Solomon pronounced them to be—*vanity*. We can arrive at a very proper estimate of the things we HAVE NOT, by the value of the things we HAVE. What great happiness, then, do those things which you now possess afford you? Solomon and our own hearts supply the answer—they are vanity. Be not deceived, therefore, with respect to the things you *have not*, because they are exactly of the same nature as the things *you have*. Solomon had them, yet he speaks of them often in the same manner—he says these are also vanity. Should you have them, no doubt you would say of them as you are compelled to say of what you now have—they are vanity. If it were possible for each of us to know and enjoy every condition of life, we would say of all, as we are compelled by bitter experience to say of those which we now know and enjoy—they are vanity. If *we* can pronounce poverty vain and vexatious, and if *Solomon* could with the same

truth pronounce riches, pleasure, fame, honor, power and splendor vain and vexatious, what is the conclusion but that *all is VANITY AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT*? Why, then, should we be disquieting ourselves to procure this vanity, by going beyond the innocent means which God has put within our reach to do so? Why are we so impatient, under the inconveniences of our present conditions, as that in our blindness we covet greater inconveniences, which afar off seem to be dressed in good and ease? The difference between the amount of happiness in poverty and that in wealth, is only an imagination—a fraudulent dream—the poor man is as happy as the rich. It only requires contentment, calmness and tranquillity in any condition of life to render us happy. It only requires avidity in the acquisition of more than we now enjoy—a covetous spirit, a discontented heart, to embitter all the blessings vouchsafed to us in any state of life. Cannot we, therefore, see the wisdom of this law in making contentment a duty, and covetousness a crime? Cannot we feel an unseen hand turning our faces to what is past, and thereby warning us of what is to come? Cannot we hear in it the voice of eternal truth, saying to us that the same vicissitudes, the same sorrows, the same pains, and the same melancholy end will overtake us in whatever condition we are in? Each of us now, if we could but suffer ourselves to know it, could taste many of the sweets of life, and enjoy many a real blessing which our discontent robs us of. Let us, therefore, henceforth endeavor to take a lesson from the fowls of the air, that neither reap nor gather into barns. Let us cease taking that covetous heed for our lives, “what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed.” The fowls are fed, but we are of greater value than they are. How is it, then, that we are in so much trouble? Are we not assured that if we seek first “the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us?” and are we not moreover assured, that “the morrow will take thought of the things of itself?” Why should we look upon our neighbor with envy, when we profess a religion which teaches that charity which coveteth not? It is the very surest evidence of a lively faith, to have learned *to be content* in any state God is pleased to put us, for no true Christian will murmur against His providence by manifesting impatience. It is also a sure evidence of fidelity to our profession, if it be our study to be quiet—“to do our own business, and to work with our hands as we are commanded, that we may walk honestly and lack nothing.” The conclusion, then, of the whole matter is this: that “our conversation be without covetousness, and we be content with such things as we have,” because the infallible God of truth hath promised that “He will never leave us nor forsake us,” and that should we connect contentment with godliness, we will find it here and hereafter, a great gain.

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